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LETTERS

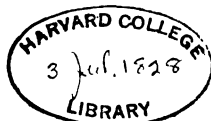
ON

THE LOGOS.

Hentworth
 BY CHARLES W. UPHAM,
 ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM.

BOSTON:
 BOWLES AND DEARBORN, 72 WASHINGTON STREET.

1828.



Gift of the Author.

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TO

THE REVEREND

HENRY WARE, D. D.

HOLLIS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

THESE LETTERS

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY

INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE following Letters were commenced without any expectation that they would pass beyond the inspection of private friendship. But in the course of the investigation of which they exhibit the results, the writer was more and more impressed with a conviction of the truth and importance of the theory contained in them. So deep and strong did this conviction at last become, that he was led to reflect seriously upon the expediency and propriety of presenting his views to the religious public in a more grave and systematical form, than is appropriate to private epistolary communications.

Upon mature consideration, however, it appeared to him that the novelty and peculiarity of the opinions to which he had been brought, called for the most natural and easy manner of presenting them. And as these Letters accurately exhibit the process by which they were reached, and the mode in which they are held, their original form has been preserved. They are now offered to the public, as they were addressed to the learned divine to whom they are inscribed.

It is surely unnecessary to say anything to awaken attention to the dignity and magnitude of the subject to which they relate. It is a matter of the highest concernment to every Christian to secure to himself an accurate conception of the office and character of Jesus Christ.

It is well known to all who watch the progress of theological controversy, and can discern the condition of religious opinion, that the decision of the great question between Unitarian and Trinitarian believers, is protracted, more than by any other cause, by the obscurity which has ever rested over 'The Word,' as it is used in the Preface of John's Gospel, and in some other places of scripture. The removal of this obscurity would, it is probable, determine effectually and forever, the opinions of all, who, in simplicity and sincerity of spirit, seek only the truth, and love it supremely.

If it should be clearly made out that the evangelist, in applying 'The Word' to Jesus Christ, meant to assert the absolute, underived, and independent divinity of his nature, then the Trinitarian will have secured one passage in scripture on which to stand, as upon a foundation. If, on the contrary, it can be shown that the use of this phrase, in application to our Saviour, demonstrates his inferiority to the Father, and declares the exaltation, not of his *nature*, but of his *office* only, then the most important, or, as some apprehend,

the only important argument, drawn from scripture, in support of the Trinitarian hypothesis, will be turned against it.

It must appear to an observing mind, that for some time past, the Trinitarian and Unitarian forces have been gradually retiring from every other position, and concentrating upon this very ground. The question which at the present day engages attention, is this ; What was the meaning of John, when he said, '*The Word was in the beginning ;*' '*It was with God ;*' '*It was God ;*' '*It created all things ;*' and '*It became flesh ?*' A satisfactory answer to this question would impart relief and joy to innumerable minds. It is in waiting for this answer, that christian truth delays her progress of triumph, not only in this country and Great Britain, but even in the remote vales and mountainous glens of the Vaudois ; in every region, indeed, in which the privilege of freely prosecuting religious knowledge is enjoyed.

It is not because the writer of these Letters flatters himself that in them he has given this answer, that he presents them to the public ; but because he indulges a strong persuasion, and an ardent hope, that the views contained in them may start the minds of more learned and experienced men, in a course of inquiry which will lead to such results as will settle the question.

It will be perceived that the nature of the subject rendered it impossible to give to this investigation a more popular form.

With such views, and under such circumstances, the following papers are communicated to the public. They are presented solely from a sense of duty, as an offering to all who are willing to investigate, and anxious to ascertain, the truth respecting the great objects of religious feeling and faith.

Trusting that the literary execution, the style and manner, of these Letters will be regarded as comparatively too unimportant to attract the severe scrutiny of critics, the writer most earnestly invokes that scrutiny to the arguments, the evidence, and the doctrine, which they exhibit. So long as it aims to detect his errors, or to guide him to the truth, no matter how stern and severe it may be, he will not shrink before it. Such a scrutiny is all that he asks or desires. If his views are founded in error, the developement of that error will be regarded as a favor. For nothing is more certain, than that he, who rescues a mind from a single opinion which is false, is a benefactor, surpassed only by him, who conducts it to the acquisition of a truth.

Salem, May 15, 1828.

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LETTERS ON THE LOGOS.

LETTER I.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

The attention of the religious public at the present day, is perhaps too exclusively directed to the progress of that unhappy party strife, which exists between the advocates and the opposers of the scheme of doctrines, called Calvinism, composed, as they are, of the whole community arrayed in hostile masses. There is reason to fear, that a spirit of mere controversy has extended to the most retired studies and contemplations of theologians. I say there is reason to fear this, not because I think the questions at issue among us, are unimportant. Far from it. I believe that the further spread of the gospel depends, under God, upon the prevalence of those views which we entertain, and the reception of them by all who go forth to convert the unbeliever and confound the gainsayer. But I fear it, because it has, in a great measure, suspended all calm and amicable discussion of questions of general interest in Theology.

The field of knowledge and inquiry is becoming more and more narrowed down to subjects immediately and obviously connected with the popular disputes of the day. The object, at present, is not so much to carry forward the general science of Divinity, as it is to overthrow certain erroneous systems which have heretofore obscured its truths, and obstructed its progress. For instance, learned, industrious, and able men have long been striving to expose and refute that erroneous opinion, which ascribes to Jesus Christ the attributes of independent, underived, and distinct divinity, and represents him as equal with the Father, as very and eternal God, to the neglect of an amicable and unbiassed research, to ascertain the real character he sustained, and the actual position he occupied. It has been demonstrated that *he is not* what the Trinitarian declares him to be; but it is not yet clearly discovered and settled, *what he really is* in the great scheme of the dispensations of religion and of the moral administration of the world. It may be, that the only way, in which false doctrines can be effectually overthrown, is by the application of patient research to discover the truth, leaving it to the truth when discovered and made known, to work out, by its own force, conviction in the minds of men, and, of its own inherent energy, to secure to itself a free course, in which it can run and be glorified.

It has always appeared to me, that the true scriptural theory, with respect to the office and character of Jesus Christ, has not yet been plainly expounded. The doctrine of the independent divinity of his nature,

besides the entire want of scriptural evidence in its favor, is encumbered with so many radical difficulties and unremovable objections, that we cannot for a moment hesitate in rejecting it. Then, on the other hand, there is a large portion of the language of scripture, which appears difficult of interpretation upon the supposition of his mere humanity, in the sense in which that phrase is commonly received. The only refuge from these two views of his character, appears, at first sight, to be in the opinion, that his body was the residence of a superangelic and preexistent spirit. But the evidence against this supposition also, drawn from the circumstances of his birth and infancy, his recorded growth in wisdom,* the descent of the Spirit upon him, and other considerations, accumulates to an amount not to be removed, and presses with a force not to be resisted. Difficulties like these, have always been connected in my mind with these several views of our Lord's character.

The accidental perusal of Moses Lowman's Three Tracts upon the Shekinah and Logos,—very learned, original, and judicious performances, but which have never made so great an impression, as they would have made, had the author stated more clearly the results of his elaborate and profound inquiries,—first led me into a train of reflection and research, which has brought me to a view of the subject highly satisfactory to my own mind. The process, and the theory in which it resulted, I now respectfully submit to your consideration. If the views, which I have been led to

* Luke, ii. 52.

adopt, shall meet with your approbation, my reliance upon them, as approximating towards a true exhibition of our Lord's character, will be much strengthened. I hope, sir, that it will not be too great an intrusion upon your very valuable time, and upon the laborious duties of your important office, to request you to run your eye over these pages, and give me your opinion of their contents.

The point to which the present inquiry is directed, is simply and solely this; What was it, in our Lord's character, which constituted his peculiar dignity, which made him worthy of being called the 'Son of God,' and of being ranked as such, by himself, in the scale of being, above angels as well as men? 'Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father.' I shall endeavour to exclude from consideration every irrelevant topic. The discussion, therefore, need not be encumbered with the question respecting the mode of our Saviour's birth into this world, since that cannot, in any way, when rightly considered, affect the elevation of his nature, for we are all equally the creation of God, whether brought into being in the ordinary and appointed, or in an extraordinary manner. Besides, whatever may be our opinions on this point, in believing that, at the commencement of his ministry, the Spirit of God descended upon him, we all consider him, from that time until the conclusion of his natural life, as invested with a dignity and glory, equal to what any mode of generation could imply, or any imagination can conceive. Let it be remembered,

therefore, that the object of the present inquiry, is, to ascertain in what consisted the dignity and exaltation of our Lord's character. As has been before intimated, there appears to be reason to believe, from much of the language of scripture, such for instance, as this phrase, John i. 18, 'the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,' that there was something, either in the person or in the office of Jesus, which made him before and above all other men. If we can arrive at a clear and intelligible view of what that precedence and superiority was, we shall be relieved from much perplexity, and be able to understand many passages, which are now obscure, and, upon either of the three hypotheses abovementioned, incapable of explanation.

Ever since it has been discovered that, in addition to its being a fraudulent interpolation, the text 1 John v. 7, proves, if anything, that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost are separate in every essential respect, and *one* in no sense whatever, except in the sameness of their testimony (for if there were any other oneness than this existing between them, their testimony, according to the Jewish,* and, in truth, according to an universal principle of evidence, would lose its value), ever since this discovery has been made by the Trinitarian, it has been considered, I believe, on all sides, that the first eighteen verses of John's Gospel are the most important passage in the Bible, in relation to the question of the Saviour's character. Believers in the distinct and absolute

* Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15.

divinity of his nature, regard these verses as their strong hold, invariably retreat to them when their other positions are rendered untenable, and have always found in them a safe refuge, not because they declare their doctrine, but simply because it has not been determined, with certainty, what they do declare. Trinitarians are sheltered, by this portion of scripture, precisely as a flying squadron is sheltered by a fog; it is useless to attempt to follow them any further, for we see not where they are, and may ourselves be lost in the pursuit. As long as there is any doubt concerning the meaning of these verses, the advocate of the trinity will insist upon it that they prove his point, and the Unitarian will never be able to drive him from this, his last fortress, until he can show their signification, and dispel the obscurity in which his adversary finds shelter and safety.

If, by common consent, this passage is looked upon as the most clear and convincing proof of the eminence of our Lord's character, we shall be authorised thus to consider it, and, by gathering together the testimony which it contains, shall arrive at what all will allow to be a correct estimate of his personal dignity and official elevation. The whole force of the passage depends upon the phrase, 'The Word.' My object, therefore, will be accomplished, if I can detect and exhibit its meaning. The Greek word, of which it is a translation, is *Λογος*. The question then comes to this; What did St John mean by 'Logos,' as it is used in the commencement of his Gospel?

LETTER II.

It is obvious, upon a cursory perusal of the first fourteen verses of John's Gospel, that they are constructed, as Michaelis has observed,* in the form of counterpositions to opinions then prevalent; that, in commencing the narrative of our Saviour's life and preaching, the Evangelist endeavours either to correct the errors of misguided friends, or to refute the false doctrines of open or secret enemies. The brief elementary propositions which he puts forth, are evidently intended for the prevention or the refutation of error. The whole structure of the sentences and the tone of the sentiments, prove this. The style throughout is direct and dogmatical, corrective and controversial. Now if this be correct, the most obvious principles of interpretation call upon us to endeavour, in the first place, to discover what those false opinions were, against which the Evangelist, in these verses, wrote; or, in other words, it must be our first step in this investigation, to inquire what were the prevalent errors in religious philosophy and belief at that time.

Although in conducting this inquiry, we must depend chiefly upon inferences, yet they will be of a very satisfactory nature. From notices of the progress and state of opinion, in the different schools and countries,

* Marsh's Michaelis, vol. iii. p. 279.

in the ages *before*, and from the careful descriptions, which the early Christian Fathers have given us, of the several systems of philosophy existing in the age immediately *after* that of the apostles, we can, with a great degree of certainty, infer the character of the speculations fashionable in the apostolic times. In pursuing this process of inquiry, we shall be led over a wide surface, which, in its several parts, has probably been surveyed before, but of which a full and connected view has not yet, perhaps, been obtained. In entering upon it, the first point to which our attention is directed, is the Jewish dispensation, considered as a system of Theology.

The fundamental articles of the religion of the Jews, were the unity and the spirituality of the Deity. They asserted the unity of God, without any modifications, in its plainest, most obvious sense. By the spirituality of God, all that they meant, because it was all that they could understand, was, that he was not confined to any place, and did not exist in a material form; but that, although everywhere invisible, he was everywhere present. To preserve these two great truths in the world, appears to have been the leading purpose of the Jewish dispensation. For this end, the Deity seems to have taken that people into his peculiar keeping, and to have separated them from all the other nations of the earth. In his regulations for their government, and in all the usages and institutions, which they were required to adopt, we can discern this motive. The Jews were constantly exposed to the danger of obscuring, or losing these

truths, especially the latter. They were surrounded by nations of polytheists; and their history affords frequent and melancholy proof of their aberrations and declensions from the simple faith revealed to their fathers, of their having imbibed idolatrous notions, and adopted heathenish practices.

But the tendency of the Jews to idolatry, which so strongly marked their history previous to the days of their captivity, was not wholly caused by the influence of the opinions or religious rites and ceremonies of the pagan worshippers on their borders. Perhaps, when we come to analyze the circumstances of their condition, by the principles of human nature, our surprise at their frequent defection from the truth, will be diminished, and we may even moderate the reproach, which we have cast upon them, as a hardhearted, stiffnecked, perverse, and rebellious race.* In the early ages, the minds of men were but little conversant with purely intellectual abstractions. On this account merely, we might suppose, that there would be a greater difficulty than is commonly imagined, in fixing in the minds of a people, a clear and distinct notion of a spiritual Divinity. It will be worth our while to reflect upon the nature of the conception we have of a spirit, and, in this way, prepare ourselves to explain the need there was of precaution, lest the Jews should fall away from their faith.

It is probable that, when we think of spirituality, all the ideas in our minds are merely negations,† such

* Fleury's Ancient Israelites, Part II. chap. 19.

† Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacre*, p. 224.

as the exclusion of color, weight, shape, and every material attribute. We think of something without limit or outlines, and all that we can conceive of that something, is, that it is unlike everything of which our senses have given us any information, every image, which the mind can contemplate, as existing without itself. It is true, we can ascribe to a spirit certain attributes; but these do not constitute parts of the original idea of that spirit, any more than the virtues and wisdom of a man are necessarily connected with the idea of that man as a being, or even with the original and immediate emotions, arising from the contemplation of his person, or his image, as it exists in the marble or on the canvass. All the attributes, which we ascribe to a man, are secondary and posterior to the idea which we form of him, as a man, as an intelligent being. So, whatever attributes we consider as belonging to God, we can only think of them as coming forth from, and connected with a certain being, whom we call God; and when we attempt to analyze the idea of God, we are concerned only with this being, as such, not with his exercises, nor with the character appropriate to his exercises; just as it is with our own minds, when thinking of them in the abstract, we do not think of memory, nor of comparison, nor of imagination, but of a certain something, we know not what, we know not precisely where, to the particular exercises of which we apply these words.*

* Edinburgh Review, No. lxxxiv. p. 318. In the celebrated article on Milton, here referred to, is presented a very striking view of the principles now stated.

If these remarks are just, we see what extreme danger the Jews were in of losing the only correct notion of their God ; for that notion consisted almost entirely in the exclusion of positive ideas, and the association with it of a single image drawn from material objects, would in a moment effectually destroy it. It was absolutely necessary, in order to preserve it, to check the indulgence of the fancy, to prevent the thoughts from going out, as it were, to gather up and put together images, in which to embody their conceptions, and upon which they could dwell in contemplation. This was the obvious end of the second commandment.

When we call to mind the great care and attention which are required to banish from our minds those material images of the Deity, to which, in early life, we all, more or less, become accustomed, and to rise up to a conception of his pure and spiritual nature ; when we consider how large a portion of the inhabitants of Christendom, at this time, have God represented to their minds in a bodily shape ; and when we reflect that in the Catholic communion the practice is countenanced of painting the Almighty Father, in the form of a venerable man,* in order to present a distinct image of him to such as will not strive to keep their apprehensions of his nature clear, and to worship him as a spirit, and who, if their minds were not possessed of an idea of him in a material form, would reject all thought, and lose all conception of him whatever ; when we think of all this, we can

* See Bell's Observations on Italy, p. 123.

easily imagine how difficult it must have been, in the earlier and ruder ages of the world, to preserve an uncultivated people in the belief of a spiritual God, who could only be contemplated by a strong and steady effort of the mind, in its most active and elevated state.

Bearing these general reflections in our minds, let us now return to the consideration of the Jewish Theology. It is well known, that from a period as far back at least as the captivity of Babylon, it has been the practice of the followers of Moses, in reading their sacred books, not to utter the name of Jehovah.* No Jew, since that period, has dared to pronounce that awful name. This is generally attributed to a feeling of reverence. Such a feeling is, without question, produced by it. But it did not altogether originate, I think, in such a feeling. There was deep wisdom, as well as piety, in the institution of this practice. It owes its existence to a policy on the part of those to whom the Jewish Theology was intrusted, the examination of which will be found important to the elucidation of the general subject of our inquiry.

It is the common definition of words, that they are 'signs of thoughts.' This is not strictly true. They are the signs of images, which are supposed to reflect the thoughts of the mind. We cannot, strictly speaking, communicate thoughts directly from one to another.†

* See Calmet's Dictionary, art. Jehovah.

† See, upon the subject of the connexion between language and thought, Dugald Stewart's valuable Essays upon the Tendency of some late Philological Speculations.

The purest, most abstract intellectual ideas, however the mind may in itself contemplate them, can only be communicated by words, which are associated with the images of external objects, or changes, or relations, supposed to bear an analogy or resemblance to the ideas intended to be communicated. So that it may be said with truth, that words, so far as they answer their purpose, convey images of external things from mind to mind. The knowledge of this fact led Herder, in his admirable work on the 'Philosophy of History,' in speaking of language, to say, 'The breath of our mouths is the picture of the universe, the type that exhibits our thoughts and feelings to the mind of another.'

This immediate connexion between words and images in the mind, led to that ingenious theory, defended by Ellis in his 'Inquiry whence cometh Wisdom,' and by Wollaston, in his great work, 'The Religion of Nature Delineated,' which asserted, that we cannot think but by the means of words. The truth is, that we cannot communicate thoughts but by words, which excite images with which they are associated. It does not appear, that we cannot think without words. Although all thoughts, therefore, may not be necessarily associated with words, words, to answer their purpose, must be associated with certain images, so related to particular thoughts, that instantly and reciprocally they suggest each other. Ideas are wafted or floated on, from one to another, by the instrumentality of images, impressed, as it were, upon particular words; and, to whatever minds these images are thus presented, they suggest the intended ideas,

either directly, or by the agency of some supposed analogy. That words receive their value and power in this manner, is rendered evident by the circumstance, that they have always been preceded, and introduced into use by hieroglyphic writing.

We now see upon what principles the utterance of the word Jehovah was forbidden; for, if used in the interchange of thought, like all other words, it would necessarily become associated with certain images, and these images would gradually assume the place of that abstract and negative notion, which alone is appropriate to the apprehension of an Omnipresent Spirit, until, in the process of time, it would be entirely obliterated in the minds of men. The only remedy or preventive of this great evil, was, to abolish the utterance of the word altogether, and, by a solemn and striking avoidance of it, to impress the minds of the worshippers continually with a sense of the impropriety of allowing themselves to speculate, in imagination, concerning the nature of that Being, whose very name their lips could not, without sin and danger, pronounce.

The wise policy of the Jewish divines did not end here. A spiritual being, equally present everywhere, could only reveal himself to particular men or communities, by some limited, local, and sensible manifestation. And there was danger lest the place in which he revealed himself, might be looked upon as especially his residence; or the material signs, by which he revealed himself, be confounded with his own spiritual nature. Moses, for instance, was exposed to the error of thinking that God was actually present upon Mount

Horeb, in the burning bush, in such a manner as to imply that he was absent from, or not equally present in, all other places. The Israelites were liable to the impression, that God could not have been as much present elsewhere, at the time when the law was given them from Mount Sinai, as he was there, and that the voice of the thunder, and the smoke, and the clouds, before which they then trembled, were the permanent accompaniments, lineaments, and exhibitions of his person. And the people, who worshipped towards the temple, because the 'most excellent glory,' the visible symbol of their God, rested within it and between the cherubim, were certainly in danger of regarding him as a local deity, and of not making the cautionary reflection, which Solomon introduced in his sublime prayer invoking him to put his name there,* 'But will God in very deed dwell with men, on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house, which I have built!' These instances will sufficiently explain what reason there was to apprehend, that the Jews might be led to confine the Deity, in their conception of him, to a circumscribed and local existence, to forget his invisible omnipresence and spirituality, amidst the glorious manifestations he had been pleased to make to them and their fathers, through the instrumentality of material objects.

We find, as if in anticipation of this error, the occasional use, in the Jewish scriptures, of the phrase 'The Word of the Lord,' or 'The Logos of the Lord,'

* 2 Chron. vi. 18.

instead of 'The Lord,' or 'God,' or 'Jehovah,' as, for instance, Psal. xxxiii. 6, 'By the *Word of the Lord* were the heavens made;' and Psal. cv. 19, 'Until the time that his *Word* came.'* In the Targums, or Chaldean paraphrases of the scriptures, which were made for the use of the common people after the captivity of Babylon, this circumlocution of the 'Logos of the Lord,' for the simple name of Jehovah, is almost universally adopted.† Thus, the Jerusalem Targum translates Gen. i. 27, '*God* created man,' by this phrase, '*The Word, or Logos of the Lord* created man.' In Gen. xv. 6, 'And he,' Abraham, 'believed *in the Lord*,' the version of the Pentateuch made by Onkelos, says, 'He believed *in The Word of the Lord*.' Num. xiv. 9, 'Rebel not ye against *the Lord*;' Onkelos, 'against *The Word of the Lord*,'‡ &c. Now the object of this circumlocution was plainly this; that men might not mistake the manifestation of God, for God himself, but might regard it, as it always really was, as the point, the spot, the channel, at and through which, The Word of God, that is, the declaration of his will and purposes, came forth to men.

In taking a view of the Theology of the Jews, we have seen with what caution they attempted to preserve the true idea of a spiritual, omnipresent God, and that, with this view, and for this purpose, they adopted the practice of avoiding the utterance of his

* In the Septuagint version, what, in these instances, is rendered 'The Lord,' is translated by Λόγος.

† Rosenmuller, John i. 1.

‡ Ben Mordecai's Apology, Letter III.

name, and of attributing all revelations and communications received at particular periods and places, not to a special interview with him personally, but to the instrumentality of striking material exhibitions, to which their attention was attracted, and through which he conveyed his instructions. They spoke of such communications and revelations, as received, not from God, but from his Logos or Word, then and there uttered and brought forth to them. The result of our inquiries thus far, is, that as early as the time of the writings of the Chaldean paraphrases, which was certainly previous to the birth of Christ, and, it is probable, as far back as the Babylonish captivity, there existed among the Jews a general use of the phrase, 'Logos of the Lord,' adopted, most evidently, for the purpose of preserving the idea of the unity and spirituality of the Supreme Being. I say, it is probable, as far back as the Babylonish captivity; for, although the Chaldean paraphrases, of which we have any knowledge, are thought by some to have no higher antiquity than the time of Christ, or twenty or thirty years before his time; yet we must carry back to a long period anterior to their production, the origin of expressions frequently found in them all, such as the 'Mimra,' or 'Logos,' applied to the divine appearances. Indeed, there can be no doubt, that some such circumlocution was adopted at the same time that the name 'Jehovah' ceased to be spoken. But Jehovah began to be regarded as an ineffable word at least as early as the captivity. The 'Mimra d'Adonai,' or 'Logos of the Lord,' is the phrase used in its place

in the remaining ancient paraphrases. It seems to be clear, from this view of the subject, that the above expression, as applied to the Divine manifestations, was in use among the Jews, at the shortest estimate, from the time of the captivity of Babylon ; that is, for more than five hundred years before Christ. We find it also in the original Hebrew scriptures. It is unquestionably used in the place of Jehovah.*

I shall attempt, in a future Letter, to explain the precise meaning of this phrase. The next step will be to inquire into the nature of the ideas which became attached to it, during the period intervening between the captivity of Babylon and the commencement of the christian era.

* Le Clerc's Hammond, Heb. iv. 12.

LETTER III.

IN order to form a judgment respecting the meaning attached to the word *Logos*, at the time of our Saviour, it will be necessary to take a brief view of the various speculations which prevailed previous to his time; for many of them contributed to that meaning, as will, I think, be made to appear. We leave the Jews, therefore, at this point, and turn our attention to the progress and principles of Gentile Philosophy and Theology. It is well known that, beyond the limits of Judea, the nations of the world were, from the earliest period of authentic history, and of fabulous tradition, overshadowed with the darkest idolatry, and given up to the most degrading superstition. With the exception of that single, separate, small branch, the whole family of man were profoundly ignorant of the true God, and of the principles of the moral administration of the universe. It is also well known that, from time to time, in every nation which had risen above the lowest level of ignorance and barbarism, individuals successively appeared, who, dissatisfied with the prevailing systems, cast doubting and inquisitive glances around upon the creation, and were anxious to learn, in the language of Ovid,—

——— *magni primordia mundi,*

‘Et rerum causas, et quid natura docebat;

‘Quid Deus? unde nives? quæ fulminis esset origo?’

These curious and independent inquirers after truth, gathered around them schools of disciples, by the means of whom they preserved and propagated a spirit of reflection and research. It is impossible to determine the precise degree of progress which they made. They seem to have dimly conceived some truths, concealed from their contemporaries, to have discerned the absurdity, and to have rejected the belief of the most palpably false and ridiculous articles of the gross superstition of their times. But they never ceased to give an outward adherence and support to all existing ceremonies, rites, and customs. There is some ground for suspicion, that these philosophers, especially the later ones, rejected, in their private speculations and confidential intercourse, the whole system of the heathen idolatry, and veiled their infidelity from public view and detection, by continuing to use the titles, and to observe the accustomed worship of the gods, with a hidden and mysterious meaning attached to their names, while they regarded them as nothing more than emblems or personifications of certain conceptions of the mind, or principles of the universe. The theory of the heathen gods, as expounded by these schools of Philosophy, was, it is probable, not that they were persons, but personifications, or allegorical representations. Philo Biblius,* as preserved by Eusebius, testifies to the truth of this supposition, by declaring 'that, with a great deal of force and straining, they turned all the stories of the gods into allegories and physical discourses.'

* Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae*. p. 20.

In the progress of physical discovery, of a more scientific classification of the objects of knowledge, and of the advancement of general intelligence, by intercommunication between distant schools and different nations, a gradual approach was made towards that simplicity which belongs to truth. The great principles of the government of the natural and moral world were found to be less and less numerous. These principles, as they were adduced, were allegorized, and, for the sake of avoiding a shock of the popular prejudice, considered as personified in the leading deities of the Pantheon. The inferior gods, to whom no such personifications were attached, began slowly to sink from their former elevated position. A gradual process was going on, imperceptibly undermining the splendid polytheism of antiquity, and loosening its hold upon individuals and communities. In the course of this progress some glimpses, perhaps, were caught of the grand truth of the unity of God ; but they were transient glimpses ; and there are many considerations, which induce me to think, that, had it not been for the christian revelation, the advancement of theological knowledge would have terminated either in something like the Platonic trinity, or in the adoption of a four-fold deity in imitation of Pythagoras, or, as is most probable, in the reception of the two principles of Manicheism ; or, if in neither of these systems, in a wide spread and universal infidelity, in which the only vibrations of opinion would be between Stoicism, on the one hand, enjoining a perpetual conflict with our natural feelings whether right or wrong, and Epicurism,

on the other, commanding us to obey and gratify those feelings, at all times, and equally without discrimination.

In order to give an idea of the extent, to which the philosophers had encroached upon, and modified, and perhaps improved the various systems of idolatrous polytheism, some of their speculations, and the theories in which they resulted, will now be presented to your consideration.

The religion of the Oriental nations was idolatrous. Their objects of worship were numerous. The progress of reformation and of advancement towards the simple truth of one God, was never carried further, in this quarter of the world, by any philosopher, than it was by Zoroaster, and by those of the ancient Magi, who adopted his opinions. He is said by Plutarch to have reduced all the principles of the Universe to these two; 'Good and Evil,' or 'Light and Darkness.' By maintaining this opinion, Zoroaster has come to be regarded as the founder of the Manichean system of Philosophy.* Let it be remembered, that the belief of these two principles prevailed in the East, and existed as a part of Persian and Asiatic Philosophy, long before the birth of our Saviour.

In passing from Asia, we come to the Egyptians. Let us notice the indications that remain, of their leading views of religion and philosophy in those early ages. Egypt and Chaldea were the sources from

* See Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, p. 290; Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacre*, pp. 309—311; Stanley's *Lives of the Philosophers*, p. 798.

which the Greeks and all the Europeans derived their polytheism and idolatry,* and from these countries did they also receive those speculations and that habit of philosophizing, which, as I have before remarked, gradually overthrew polytheism and idolatry. There is no doubt that the priests and learned men among the Egyptians, did allow themselves great liberty in allegorizing, and speculating concerning their gods. They had struck out, and were in possession of an arcane and recondite theology, which they kept concealed from the vulgar, by means of allegorical fables, and symbolical writing. Of this we have proof resting upon the authority of Origen,† Clemens of Alexandria, and Plutarch. We should infer it, without any direct evidence, from the well known fact that Pythagoras and the chief Grecian philosophers seem to have caught an allegorizing spirit, and to have adopted those of their opinions, in which they differed from the popular superstition of their times, while travelling in Egypt, and the adjacent countries.

Vitringa, in his learned and very valuable book, entitled *Observationes Sacræ*, ‡ quotes Jamblicus, a contemporary of Eusebius, who made it his business to inform himself thoroughly, concerning the Theology of the Egyptians, as asserting, that they gave rise to the notion of a regular order or succession of spiritual beings, called *Æons* or *Emanations*, deriving their ex-

* Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, p. 309; Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacræ*, pp. 75, 76.

† Cudworth's *Intell. System*, pp. 314, 315.

‡ Vitringa's *Observat. Sac. lib. v. p. 162*.

istence from the Supreme Original Cause of all things, and intrusted, according to their respective rank and dignity, with the several departments of the administration of the world. The Egyptians are supposed to have been led, by their free speculations, conducted, as they were, in perfect concealment and security, beneath and behind their hieroglyphics and their allegories, nearer to a just conception of the unity of God, than any other heathen nation.*

Whether this opinion be correct, and, indeed, every question concerning this extraordinary people, who, in the early ages, were teachers of the world † in both truth and error, whose priests, at one and the same time, countenanced and perpetuated the most gross and degrading superstition, and imparted instruction to wandering philosophers, and sent them home to their various countries, bearing with them a wisdom, which enabled them to discern the folly of the systems of idolatry established there, and to commence the work of their overthrow,—will soon, we think, be settled by the application of the recent wonderful discovery of the principles of hieroglyphic writing, to the yet numerous remains of Egyptian letters; a discovery which hardly has its equal in importance and interest in the history of literature or of man.

I now proceed to give a brief sketch of the influence of a philosophizing spirit upon the religion of the Greeks and the Europeans. There is much reason to receive as correct the opinion which the emperor

* Cudworth's *Intell. System*, p. 334.

† Stillingfleet's *Orig. Sac.* p. 267.

Julian entertained and endeavoured to establish.* It was this; that the heathen Greeks, although supporters of the worship of many gods, believed in one Supreme Deity, to whom all others were considered subordinate. In his book against the Christians, as quoted by Cyril in his reply to it, he represents this Supreme Deity, as holding the same relation to the other gods, that the sovereign of a large empire sustains towards the governors, whom he has appointed to exercise dominion over particular provinces. The same opinion was more fully expressed in the oration of this emperor in praise of the sun, as quoted by the same author, in which he supposes one Supreme First Cause, corresponding with the 'τε αγαθον' of Plato, and, as derived from this First Cause, an eternal mind or intelligence. A large amount of evidence to this point is scattered throughout the classical writings. Homer, in his *Odyssey*, twice speaks of God, in both cases evidently meaning Jupiter, in one expressly designating him as omnipotent;—*δυναται γαρ πάντα*. He also says that he has control over the principles of good and evil;—*αγαθοντι κακοντι διδοι*. † Both Virgil and Ovid speak of Jupiter, as the Almighty Father, 'Pater Omnipotens.' The Christian Fathers undoubtedly pushed this mode of theorizing away the heathen idolatry, to an unwarrantable extent, in their ruinous zeal to make the difference between Paganism and revealed religion, appear as little as possible. Still,

* Cudworth's *Intell. Sys.* p. 274.

† *Ibid.* p. 200.

however, the general proposition, that the Grecian idolaters recognised one superior and supreme God, is undoubtedly correct.

In tracing the progress of Grecian Philosophy, we discern frequent fluctuations of opinion, as might be expected, where men had nothing fixed to guide them in their speculations. Sometimes they appear to have risen up towards a clear conception of the unity of the Divine nature, and, while in this elevated flight, they look down upon the whole army of the gods, if not with contempt, certainly as nothing more than mere emblems, or personifications of the principles of the moral and material universe. At other times, they seem to have descended again into the darkness and superstition, which enveloped the great mass of their idolatrous countrymen, and to conform precisely to their usages, their modes of thinking, and their belief. It may be, perhaps, that their apparent conformity, in their practice and in several parts of their writings, to the worship and to the acknowledgment of a multitude of gods, was not owing to any change in their opinions, but to the influence of considerations, such as the following, stated by Cudworth, in that vast storehouse of ancient wisdom, his celebrated 'Intellectual System of the Universe.'* 'The truth of the whole business seems to be this, that the ancient Pagans did physiologize in their theology, and whether looking upon the whole world animated, as the Supreme God, and consequently the several parts of it, as his living members, or else apprehending it at least to be a mir-

* Cudworth's *Intell. System*, p. 228.

ror, or visible image of the Invisible Deity, and consequently all its several parts, and things of nature, but so many several manifestations of the Divine power and providence, they pretended, that all their devotion towards the Deity, ought not to be huddled up in one general and confused acknowledgment of a Supreme Invisible Being, the creator and governor of all, but that all the several manifestations of the Deity in the world, considered singly and apart by themselves, should be made so many distinct objects of their devout veneration; and therefore in order hereunto did they προσηγορεύειν, speak of the things in nature, and the parts of the world as persons, and consequently as so many gods and goddesses; yet so, as that the intelligent might easily understand the meaning that these were all really nothing else, but so many several names and notions, of that one *Numen*, Divine force and power, which runs through the whole world, multiformly displaying itself therein.'

Knowing that the Greeks were in the habit of philosophizing, in this manner, concerning their religion, and that they did not always regard their gods as actual beings, but simply, for the most part, as personifications of the several departments, and principles of the government of one or more superior Deities, we shall be prepared to find, in their writings, a great variety and freedom of speculation, concerning the nature and operations of Divine power; and this we do find. From the time of the traditionary Orpheus, to that of Plato, the sublime master of this dim, mystic, transcendental lore, we meet with almost infinitely various

theories and hypotheses respecting the powers that are above. The mind appears to have struggled often, but always in vain, towards the truth, as it has been revealed to us, and as we now read it, by the light of this revelation, everywhere in the volume of nature. The great obstacle, in the way of reaching it, was an ignorance of the possibility of the coexistence with material objects, and of the diffusion throughout the universe, of one Spirit, everywhere intelligent, everywhere and simultaneously active. In consequence of their ignorance of this truth, they all had recourse to the supposition of derived dependent beings, among whom the government of things was distributed; and the highest aim of the philosopher was to reduce these beings to as small a number as was possible, consistently with an entire and effectual administration of the universe.

If it be asked, why the knowledge of the existence of this one all pervading Spirit was not obtained from the Jews? the answer is, that the reverential circumspection, observed by that people, in avoiding the utterance of the name of Jehovah, and their practice of speaking of all his operations and interpositions and communications in the circumlocution before described, 'The Word, or Logos, of the Lord,' had a tendency to mislead observers and travellers, rather than to inform them rightly on this subject. There is good reason to believe, that this custom among the Jews, of attributing all revelations and manifestations from above, to the instrumentality of 'The Word, or Logos, of the Lord,' laid the foundations, not only for erroneous opinions, among their own descendants, but also for much of

those mysterious systems of divine Philosophy, which were brought to perfection in the school of Plato,* a school that, for many weary ages, has prevailed against and eclipsed the school of Jesus. Of this, however, more will be said hereafter.

In tracing the principles of nature up to their ultimate sources, or, rather, in reducing the number of original underived gods, the early Greeks came to very different and strange conclusions. One philosopher, Anaximander, rested at last in 'infinity,' as his first principle.† How he made all things concentre in that, we are not informed. Thales considered 'water' the origin and source of all things;‡ which also appears to have been Homer's opinion. In the fourteenth book of the Iliad, two hundred and first line, he has this expression; 'Ὀκεανὸς τε δῖος γένεσθαι.' In the two hundred and fortysixth line of the same book of the Iliad, Homer again expresses the same idea;—

'Ὀκεανὸς, ἰσχυρὸς γένεσις πάντων τετυκται.'

Virgil, in the three hundred and eightysecond line of the fourth Georgic, repeats the sentiment; '*Oceanumque patrem rerum.*'

Pherecydes Syrus, a contemporary of Thales, said that the original and only eternal beings were Jupiter; and Time, and the Earth. || Pythagoras appears to have been very capricious and variable. At one time he regarded as the chief deities, the sun and

* Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 366.

† Stanley's Lives, p. 61. ‡ Ibid. p. 5. 6.

|| Cudworth's Intell. System, p. 370.

moon and stars. At other times he seems to have entertained the Manichean notion, in an obscure manner, under the names of Monad and Dyad. And to him also is attributed the doctrine of a *Tetrad* or *Tetractys*, a fourfold division of the Deity; an idea, drawn either by some Rabbinical fancy from the *Tetragrammaton*, or name of God among the Hebrews, consisting of four letters, or from some peculiar properties of the number four.*

This will serve as a specimen of the speculations of philosophers, previous to Plato. We have seen, that at one time, the original principles were made, we cannot conceive in what manner, to depend upon, and concentrate in one principle, such as water or infinity. Then, again, we find them reduced no further than to three, and then diminished to two, and then multiplied to four; the number continually changing, according to the changing fancies of the philosophers.

It only remains for me, in this part of the discussion, to speak of Plato, and his system of religious Philosophy. The mind of this philosopher, although, in many respects, one of the most exalted and refined ever connected with a mortal frame, was very much addicted to mystic, airy, and, as they may well be called, transcendental speculations and wanderings. And he so often expatiates, in this cloudy upper region, that it is difficult to ascertain precisely what his elementary principles were. Of this, however, there is satisfactory

* Cudworth's *Intell. System*, pp. 371, 375; Stanley's *Lives*, pp. 433, 484, 493, 505, 512; Enfield's *History of Philosophy*, Book ii. Chap. xii. 1.

evidence;* that he recognised some supreme, independent, underived power, to which he gave the name of *τὸ ἓν*, 'The One,' defining its number, and *τὸ ἀγαθόν*, 'The Good,' declaring its nature. The next in order to this moral principle, but beneath it, and proceeding from it, he placed the intellectual principle of the universe, which he called *Νῦς*, or 'Mind,'† and which was also called *Λόγος*, the word being used, in his Philosophy, as equivalent with *Νῦς*, and, of course, in that sense, in which it means 'Reason.'‡ The next and last of Plato's ultimate principles, was called by him *ψυχὴ*, or 'The Soul of the World.'|| So that the Theology of Plato, if all this be nothing more than a hidden allegory, which perhaps it is, was simply this, and it is worthy of all admiration, as coming from one to whom the true God had not been revealed; that the first principle in the universe is Benevolence; the second, Intelligence; the third, Life or Vitality, or the Active Principle.

When Plato surveyed the world in which we are placed, these three seemed to him to be the leading and prevailing principles, by which it was governed. And it is an ever enduring monument of the purity, and a demonstration of the true refinement and sublime elevation of his mind, that he gave the preeminence to the moral, over the intellectual and life giving principle. What a testimony it is also, to

* Cudworth's *Intell. System*, p. 406. † *Ibid.* p. 573.

‡ Stanley's *Lives*, p. 207; Vitringa's *Obser. Sac. lib. v.* p. 162.

|| Cudworth's *Intell. System*, p. 403; Le Clerc's *Art Critica. P. II.* S. I. c. xv. p. 10.

the benevolence of Him, who framed and governs all things, that so powerful and capacious an intellect as that which was imparted to this illustrious philosopher, when left entirely free to its own speculations, after having traversed and explored all nature to discover what principle in creation it might be, which pervaded most extensively, controlled most powerfully, and surpassed all others in the amount of its agency and the range of its operations, should settle down in the full belief, and most thorough conviction, that that principle is Benevolence !

If these three principles were not considered in the light of an allegory by Plato, the only other alternative is to suppose, that he regarded them, as the great body of his followers unquestionably did, as an order of deities, above all others, and standing, with respect to each other, in the succession in which they have been named. This theory was generally adopted by the Western schools of Philosophy. Changes took place frequently, not only in the names of these Divine principles, but also in the meaning attached to those names. They were sometimes used as synonymous with the three Capitoline gods, as they were called, Jupiter,* Minerva,† and Juno ; and these again, were allegorized to mean, the Middle Ether, the Higher Heaven, the Lower Air and Earth.

When this triad had become perfectly established in the Pantheon, many speculations were started respecting the meaning, and origin, and relative rank of its several parts. Controversies arose, and were multi-

* Cudworth's *Intell. Sys.* p. 450. † *Ibid.* p. 309.

plied, until the whole subject was covered up and confounded by an infinite mass of superinduced mysticism and theories, and fanciful interpretations and phrases. In the course of this wild speculation, there sprung up and came into fashion, a whole host of such expressions as these; '*Selfbegotten*,' '*Eternal Generation*,' '*The Father of himself*,' &c.* Writers and reasoners of this school, being, like the leaders of all other sects, desirous of bringing as much of the authority of antiquity, as was possible, to bear in favor of their tenets, tasked their industry and ingenuity, it is probable, to the utmost, to force the systems of Pythagoras, and of every other old philosopher, to appear to give evidence in support of their trinity. And it was by no means a difficult matter, as Cudworth in his great work has given a practical proof, to find, or to make such evidence, as would suit their purpose, in every actual or possible system of heathen idolatry. All that was necessary, was, to ascertain which were considered the three most important and powerful gods, in the several systems, and to separate them from the rest, and declare them to be a trinity. The materials, collected, without doubt, long before, in this manner, and for this purpose, were all ready at the hands of those Platonizing Fathers, who went over to Christianity, in order to bring Christianity back to Platonism. They, and their followers, who have been disposed to prove the truth of the trinity, by demonstrating, that it had been the foundation and fountain of every form of absurd, gross, and horrible superstition, that may be

* Cudworth's *Intell. Sys.* p. 574.

found to have existed, have had nothing to do, but to repeat over, what had unquestionably been gathered together, and written out by the pagan followers of Plato, long before our Saviour appeared on the earth.*

I shall conclude this brief view of the philosophy of Plato, by merely observing, that it is probable, that a correct description of it, as framed and left by him, is contained in a book called 'Platonisme Devoilé,' 'Platonism Unveiled,' written by an anonymous author, who, notwithstanding his Socinianism, is much applauded by Vitringa for his learning. I have not seen the book, and only know it, as quoted by Vitringa and others. Its purpose is to prove that the trinity which Plato adopted, was understood, by him, to mean no more than the three principal properties which appeared to him to be exhibited in the creation and course of the world; Goodness, Wisdom, and Energy.†

I cannot avoid giving utterance to two reflections, which have been continually breaking in upon the train of my thoughts, in the course of this part of the inquiry. The first is, that the early Fathers of the church were an indefatigable and bold race of men; not so much

* Preface to Cudworth's Intellectual System, and everywhere in his fourth chapter.

† Vitringa's Obs. Sac. lib. v. p. 147. Since these Letters were written, I have been permitted, by the kindness of a friend, to look into the work here referred to, 'Le Platonisme Devoilé.' It was written by Souverain, and richly merits the good opinion of Vitringa, as well as the general celebrity it has obtained. It gives an interesting and ingenious account of the 'Logos' of Plato and of St John; and, although it does not present, still it contributes much to illustrate and confirm, the view of the subject attempted to be set forth in these Letters.

in compelling the various heathen schools, of whatsoever diversity in their doctrines, to give testimony in favor of their trinity—this, as has been said before, was already done at their hands; but their labor consisted in the endeavour to force the christian scriptures to testify to its truth; and their boldness, in daring to make the attempt, in direct opposition, as one of their number confesses,* and as another implies,† to the great body of believers in the church, and the uniform letter of the scriptures.

There are no more striking specimens of special pleading on record, than these laborious and persevering writers present, in their arguments to this point. They attempt to marshal the whole host of Oriental and Egyptian idolaters, and the Grecian polytheists, from Orpheus, and Hesiod, and Homer, down to Plato, in harmonious union with the sacred writers of both covenants, into one solid column, in defence of

* Tertullian adversus Praxeam, c. iii. p. 635. This treatise against Praxeas, who is known to have been a Unitarian, is invaluable, as containing a most perfect attestation to the fact, that, in Tertullian's day, the great body of Christians, the common, unlearned, unsophisticated Christians, who, according to his declaration, made up the *larger part*, were unwilling to admit the *æconomy*, as he calls it, of the trinity, for fear that it was inconsistent with, and would undermine the unity of God in the strictest sense, as they held it. 'Simplices enim quique,' says he, 'ne dixerim imprudentes et idiotæ, *quæ major semper credentium pars est—expavescunt ad æconomiam.*' He gives the reason, too, why they thus dreaded the 'æconomy' of the trinity; 'Quoniam et ipsa regula fidei, e pluribus Diis seculi, ad unicum et verum Deum transfert;'*'because the rule of their faith enjoined the belief of the one true God'*—a most wise and prophetic objection!

† Origen, as quoted by Cudworth, Intell. Sys. pp. 314, 315.

what they were pleased to determine to be the true theory of the revealed God, in acknowledged contradiction to the current belief of the church to which they had voluntarily joined themselves. It is plain to every observer, that they were more solicitous to add to the number of the converts, than to preserve, in their simplicity and purity, the doctrines, of the gospel; and that, in order the more easily to win the favor of the various philosophizing sects, to our religion, they did not much scruple to bend and twist its records into an apparent conformity with the obscure and mysterious dogmas of their several schools. They endeavoured to make a similarity appear to exist between them, in as many points as possible, and to diminish, to the greatest extent, the amount of change necessary in the opinions of a person shifting his relations as a disciple, from Zoroaster, or Pythagoras, or Plato, to Jesus. Stillingfleet, in that admirable compound of learning, sense, and wit, his '*Origines Sacræ*,' says, that 'it is too evident, from the writings of some, that they rather seek to accommodate the scriptures to the sentiments of the school of Plato, than to reform that by the scriptures;' and he quotes Tertullian, as complaining of those, who, in his day, corrupted the truth, by mingling with it the notions of philosophers; '*Veritatis dogmata ad philosophicas sententias adulterare.*'*

My other reflection is this; there is nothing surprising in the origin of the trinity, and in its adoption into the christian church. The process, by which the

* Vitringa's *Obser. Sac.* lib. v. p. 145; Stillingfleet's *Orig. Sac.* p. 317.

mind of Plato was conducted, in the course of its contemplations and investigations, to the belief of his three *archical* principles, as they are called, was extremely natural. The deification of these principles took place, in conformity to the settled opinions and established usages of the times; and the eloquence and genius of the great philosopher, and of many of his followers, rendered his system popular, and extended it to distant schools; and it happened from these and other causes to be preserved in the world, until it became embalmed, as it were, by being wrapped up with the doctrines of the church of Christ. While it was the purest and most rational scheme of Philosophy, it offered to the priests and apologists of that simple gospel, which was preached to the poor, exactly what they wanted, to put them on a level, in the public estimation, with the heathen schools; namely, a certain amount of mystery and recondite learning. I referred, a page or two before, to a quotation from Origen, as found in Cudworth. I now present it to you entire. Let it be remembered, that Origen is writing against Celsus, who had said that he thoroughly understood all that belonged to Christianity. ‘Celsus,’ says he, ‘seemeth here to me, to do just as if a man travelling into Egypt, where the wise men of the Egyptians, according to their country learning, philosophize much about those things that are accounted by them divine, whilst the idiots,’ that is, the common, unlearned people, ‘in the mean time, hearing only certain fables which they know not the meaning of, are very much pleased therewith; Celsus, I say, in pretending to

know all about Christianity, doth as if such a sojourner in Egypt, who had conversed only with those idiots, and not been at all instructed by any of the priests, in their arcane and recondite mysteries, should boast that he knew all that belonged to the Egyptian Theology.'

Who, after reading this passage, can entertain a doubt concerning the fact, that, at the time of Origen, the common people in the church were ignorant of the *mysteries*, as they are still called, *of the faith*; that Celsus could not learn these mysteries from the people, simply for the reason, that they were ignorant of them; and that they were confined to the priests? This single passage explains the reason why the mysterious doctrines, still attempted to be forced upon our belief, were introduced into the church at all. It was done in order to place the christian priesthood in the same relation to the people, in which the Egyptian priests stood towards the populace of their country; as the revered preservers of those mysteries, which it would not be proper to reveal to the multitude. It amounts to an admission, that those mysteries were not contained in the scriptures, but were kept concealed in the possession of the priests; and it establishes forever, beyond all controversy, the all important truth, that, at the time of Origen, the '*major pars credentium*,' the great body of believers, did not receive these mysterious articles of faith, and that it was the settled policy of the priests, at that period, to keep them from their knowledge. If, however, any should doubt, whether the inferences, here drawn from the passage of Origen just quoted, are sufficiently supported by

the passage itself, that doubt can hardly continue, when they read the following almost open confession, made by the same learned and zealous Father, in the same work against Celsus. It seems that Celsus had reproached the Christians, or the christian priests, with keeping their doctrines secret. In reply, Origen partly denies the charge, and mentions several doctrines of the gospel, *such as a future punishment, and the resurrection of the dead*, which were everywhere published. He concludes his defence in these words; ‘But if there be some *arcana imperii* in the christian religion, which are not fit to be communicated to the vulgar, it cannot be denied, that there are the same in Philosophy!’ *

* In this instance, I quote from a translation of this work into English, by James Bellamy, Esq.

LETTER IV.

THAT part of my design, which respects the several speculations and theories prevalent in the different nations and schools, as they existed separately, previous to the formation of eclectic systems of Philosophy, has been already accomplished. I now proceed to trace the formation of these eclectic systems. From the materials already collected, we shall be able to take a wide survey of the elements of which they were compounded, of the sources from which they were drawn, and of the whole ground which they occupied.

In the first place, I would remark, that the heathen sects were actuated in their views of each other, by a very different spirit from that, which, so unhappily, governs the several christian denominations. Instead of opposing, and rejecting each other's opinions with the utmost virulence, they exhibited, on all occasions, the greatest possible courtesy, and the most cheerful and amiable compliance. Instead of regarding a new religious opinion, as necessarily an enemy, they invariably looked upon it as a friend, and, not unfrequently, adopted it into the family of their previous opinions. The Greeks and Romans, treated the gods of the Barbarians, as they politely termed the inhabitants of all countries which they had brought into subjection to their empire, with precisely the same kind

attention, manifested by the late victorious armies of France towards the pictures and statues, which they met by the way. They brought them home with them to their own temples, and ranged them by the side of their national deities, and regarded them with equal reverence and attachment.

‘In the purest ages of the Commonwealth,’ says Gibbon, ‘Cybele and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn embassies; and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities, by the promise of more distinguished honors, than they possessed in their native country. Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind.’* This trait in the character of the ancients, is admirably described in the polished diction of this most ingenious, learned, and eloquent of historians. ‘The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord. The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancor; nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, although fondly attached to his national rites, admitted, with implicit faith, the different religions of the earth.’ Again; ‘Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations

* Decline and Fall, ch. ii.

were less attentive to the difference, than to the resemblance of their religious worship.' In another place, he speaks of 'the facility with which the most different and even hostile nations embraced, or at least respected, each other's superstitions.' He contrasts this mutual toleration and respect among the heathen nations, with the exclusive bigotry of the Jews. 'The polite Augustus condescended to give orders, that sacrifices should be offered for his prosperity, in the temple of Jerusalem; while the meanest of the posterity of Abraham, who should have paid the same homage to the Jupiter of the Capitol, would have been an object of abhorrence to himself and his brethren.' * Gibbon gives, it must be confessed, a most melancholy reason for the existence of this tolerant spirit. 'In their writings, and conversation, the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods, and sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith, or of worship. It was indifferent to them, what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached,

* *Decline and Fall*, ch. xv.

with the same inward contempt, and the same external reverence, the altars of the Lybian, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.' *

But, whatever were its causes, toleration did always exist, to its greatest extent of compliance, in the heathen world. Keeping this excessive charity of the ancients in view, we shall be able to conceive, in some measure, of the effect gradually produced upon Theology and Philosophy, by growing habits of intercommunication between different and distant nations, whether for the acquisition of knowledge, the gratification of curiosity, or the purposes of commerce. The various systems of belief, or of opinion, must have been diffused and slowly mingled together. This effect, too, would be much promoted by the progress of conquest, and be finally brought to its consummation, by the universal extension of the Grecian, and then of the Roman dominion, throwing all the sects and nations, the whole known world, into one vast community, within the limits of one comprehensive empire.

We accordingly find, everywhere, traces of the mixed existence of all the various and discordant systems, which had originally been confined to distinct schools, and separate nations. The Oriental notion of two distinct ruling principles in the government of the world, the deep mysteries of Egyptian lore, and the various speculations of the Grecian schools, were all made to contribute to the studies and reasonings of

* Decline and Fall, ch. ii.

those addicted to the contemplation and discussion of the subject of religion. And this was everywhere a favorite subject. Schools of theological learning were established in various parts of the Roman world, to which all curious and reflecting persons were attracted, where they were imbued with the spirit of philosophizing, and from which they went forth to discuss deep and doubtful questions with all who would listen to them. Innumerable wild, fanciful, and incoherent schemes of Divinity and Cosmogony were invented and became prevalent.

The people of Judea did not escape the infection of the times. They, too, had their *Kabbala*, or deep schemes of doctrine and systems of science, gathered both from the eastern and western schools of philosophy, in which the principles of the revelation by Moses were made to combine with the heterogeneous notions of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Egyptians and Greeks.* Inquisitive Israelites, who resided in Gentile countries, frequently became converts to some of the opinions of the philosophers, and in different modes of combination, adopted them in connexion with the articles of their own faith, whether derived from the sacred books of their Prophets and their Law, or from the traditions of their doctors, many of which were extremely fanciful and ridiculous, constituting by far the largest part of their religious faith, and held with as much reverence as the precepts of Moses. In return, there is no reason to doubt, they would endeavour to

* Mosheim, Cen. I, Part II. ch. i. Beausobre and L'Enfant, Preface Generale, p. cci, note 2.

enlighten their Gentile teachers respecting their ritual, customs, and traditions; to expound to them the wonders, which the hand of the Lord had wrought for their fathers, and to describe the glorious manifestations and revelations, which had been made to them, by his Word or Logos, in the burning bush, in the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, on Mount Sinai, and within the Holy of Holies, between the Cherubim of the temple.

In this manner, mutually giving and receiving from each other, select systems of Theology of various kinds were formed, at different periods and places, and propagated from school to school, and from country to country; Gentile borrowing of Jew, and Jew borrowing of Gentile, until the spirit of inventive speculation, upon deep and mysterious topics, possessed all minds, and extended to all nations; so that, in the days when John wrote his Gospel, Judea, as well as the heathen countries, was overrun by teachers and preachers of every imaginable combination of doctrines, and the truths of Christianity were in danger of being all swallowed up, in the flood of conjectures, and hypotheses, and schemes, which was sweeping into one common confusion every form of Philosophy or of faith. Many rash and bold adventurers from the heathen schools, seized upon some of the articles of the christian faith, and mixed them up with errors and fancies of their own,* in the hope, that, by starting and establishing a new compound of notions, they might acquire to them-

* Witsius, *Misc. Sac.*, as quoted by Vitringa, *Obser. Sac. Lib. v.* p. 148.

LITERS ON THE LOGOS.

... of originality, and secure the glory of
... as the founders of a system. Christ
... also, were captivated by the theories in-
... and were fond of associating them with de-
... of the gospel.* The advocates of the error
... times were called Gnostics; an appellation
... them in consequence of their high preten-
... extraordinary science and knowledge. The
... intended to specify any one sect, but en-
... every description, as they then existed.†
... person will be able, after having observed
... of the different schools of Philosophy
... been described, to imagine, with a great
... accuracy, the general character of the mixed
... which grew up from their various combina-
... of which the apostle John might think
... admonish his christian brethren to avoid.
... to describe the erroneous systems,
... revealed, so far as we are enabled to
... from the scattered and imperfect
... I will state what appears to be
... and probable account of the progress
... attached to the phrase, 'The Word
... the Lord,' from the point of time at
... the Babylonish captivity, until the
... composition of the Gospel of St John.
... I have attempted to account
... 'The Logos of the Lord,'
... corresponding to it in the Hebrew

church, and making the church itself the object of
seen reason it believe that a church that is
originally it exists to be a church, and that
the Supreme Authority of the church is the
purpose of preserving the church in its
the manifestations, and to make it a church
and places, it is not a church, but a church
whatever. In order to preserve the church, it is
that the church is not a church, but a church
present, and which is not a church, but a church
a church, and which is not a church, but a church
scribed doctrine, it is not a church, but a church
of the church is not a church, but a church
instructed in doctrine, and which is not a church
concerning the church, and which is not a church
nature, which is not a church, but a church
fathers, and which is not a church, but a church
appeared in a church, and which is not a church
Wall, or Wall, and which is not a church, but a church
came forth in them. The church is not a church
cation or revelation, and which is not a church
outward signs of church, and which is not a church
purposes, and which is not a church, but a church
instead of saying, that the church is not a church
symbols, they were not a church, but a church
mere instruments of church, and which is not a church
his existence, and which is not a church, but a church
to them. As we assert the church, and which is not a church
minds, and intelligence, and which is not a church, but a church

selves the credit of originality, and secure the glory of being regarded as the founders of a system. Christian converts, also, were captivated by the theories that prevailed, and were fond of associating them with the doctrines of the gospel.* The advocates of the errors of those times were called Gnostics; an appellation, applied to them in consequence of their high pretensions to extraordinary science and knowledge. This word is not intended to specify any one sect, but embraces all of every description, as they then existed.†

A judicious person will be able, after having observed the peculiarities of the different schools of Philosophy which have been described, to imagine, with a great degree of accuracy, the general character of the mixed systems, which grew up from their various combination, the errors of which the apostle John might think it his duty to admonish his christian brethren to avoid. Before I proceed to describe the erroneous systems, which then prevailed, so far as we are enabled to describe them, from the scattered and imperfect notices that remain, I will state what appears to be the most rational and probable account of the progress of the meaning, attached to the phrase, 'The Word or Logos of the Lord,' from the point of time at which we left it, the Babylonish captivity, until the period of the composition of the Gospel of St John.

In the second Letter, I have attempted to account for the origin of the phrase, 'The Logos of the Lord,' or rather of a phrase corresponding to it in the Hebrew

* Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 315; Eusebius, lib. vi. c. 19,

† Mosheim, Cen. I. Part II,

church, and among the Jewish people. And we have seen reason to believe, that, so far from being intended originally to express the idea of a being distinct from the Supreme Jehovah,* it was adopted for the very purpose of preserving the belief of his unity, by divesting the manifestations, made by him at particular times and places, of the idea of any distinct personality whatever. In order to prevent the error of supposing, that the Divine essence, which is everywhere equally present, and equally imperceptible, had ever made a sensible appearance, under a limited and circumscribed outline, or shape, or species, the administrators of the church of Israel, most prudently and wisely instructed its members, when speaking or writing concerning the wonderful exhibitions of a miraculous nature, which had been vouchsafed to them, or to their fathers, never to say, that God immediately and really appeared in a personal manner, but that his *Logos*, or *Will*, or *Word*, then and there, was made known, or came forth to them. When the idea of a communication or revelation, made to the minds of men, by any outward signs or sensible symbols of the existence, purposes, laws, or power of God, was to be expressed, instead of saying, that God appeared in these signs or symbols, they were taught to speak of them, as the mere instruments or vehicles, by which the ideas of his existence, purposes, laws, or power, were conveyed to them. As we arrest the attention of each other's minds, and interchange our ideas by the means of

* Michaelis, Vol. III. p. 280.

words, so it was a most natural use of language among the Jews, to call all those appearances, by which God had communicated with them, his 'Word.' We have then the existence of this phrase in the Hebrew nation, certainly as far back as the captivity of Babylon. We can discern the purposes for which it was invented. We perceive its original, simple, and, as will hereafter, I think, be shown, true meaning. Let me now offer my conjectures respecting the causes, which attached to it that false signification, which, in substance, has so long adhered to it, and the process by which it became connected with it.

We turn our attention, in the first place, to the eastern nations. Their leading philosophical or theological doctrine, as we have seen, was the belief of the existence of two original ruling principles, one the source of good, the other, of evil. These nations were in constant contact and collision with the Jews, who were finally brought into captivity among them. They would, of course, become acquainted with the customs of the Jews, with their worship, and with their religious phraseology. They would hear them speak of their God, under the name of 'The Word.' They would find him thus denominated in their sacred books. It would be natural for them to regard this Deity, as identical with either one or the other of their own gods, and it would depend wholly upon the opinion, which might happen to prevail respecting the character of the God of the Jews, whether he should be associated or identified with the good or the evil spirit of their own Theology. Some would regard him

as coincident with the former, while others would consider him as only worthy of being ranked with the latter. We shall find traces of the existence of both of these opinions. There is some evidence, it seems, that many, being unable to determine to which of these two ruling principles, the God of the Jews, spoken of by them under the name of 'The Logos of the Lord,' was most nearly allied, avoided the difficulty at once, by supposing that he was coincident with neither, but the author and parent of them both.*

We come, in the next place, to the Egyptians. From the little that is at present known of their religious Philosophy, we cannot speculate, with much security, concerning the mode in which they received or interpreted the Jewish appellation, which is the subject of our investigation. We can, however, conjecture, from the circumstance of their having originated the doctrine of divine Emanations or *CEons*, that they would regard it in the light of one of them, and assign it a place somewhere in the order of succession, in which they supposed them to be produced and arranged. This conjecture we shall find amply sustained.

Lastly, we proceed to the Greek Philosophy, and especially to that form of it which finally prevailed, the system of Plato. I have endeavoured to delineate and dispose in their proper order the original principles upon which it was constructed. These principles were three in number. It is extremely easy to conceive in what manner a Grecian philosopher of the school of Plato, would have regarded the Jewish

* Michaelis, Vol. III. p. 281.

Theology. He would find in the scriptures which contained it, the name Jehovah, most evidently belonging to the supreme object of worship, to a being, whom the whole people regarded with such profound reverence, as to think themselves unworthy to utter his name. This highest and most revered being he would consider as corresponding with his most elevated deity, *το ις* or *το αγγελον*.

He would be wholly unacquainted with the considerations, which led to the use of the phrase, the origin of which has been explained before, '*Mimra*.' It would appear to him to be applied to some divine being. Its literal meaning was Word, and when translated into his own language, would be represented by *Λογος*. Now *Λογος*, in one of its common acceptations, signified *reason*, and, it is highly probable, had been often used by him and his school, as a synonyme with *Νους*, in its application to his second principle or deity, and in this sense he would receive it. Nothing, indeed, would have been more natural than for Plato, or for one of his disciples, to have regarded the '*Mimra*' of the Chaldees, and the Hebrew word corresponding to it, as the titles of a being, identical with their own second god, and to have been confirmed in the practice of using *Λογος*, in the place of *Νους*, but as synonymous with it, when speaking or writing of him. He would either adopt it, or be confirmed in its use as the title of his second deity; but still he would use it in his own previous sense, as equivalent to *reason*.

I do not entertain a doubt, that *Λογος*, which meant, as will be shown in the proper place, entirely a different thing in the Hebrew church, by some such process as this, came into use, as the title of the Intellectual Principle, or Mind, or Reason, as deified in the Greek Philosophy, which originally, without question, was called *Νους*. I know, that in making this conjecture, I am coming into collision with the prevailing opinion of the learned, which, in opposition to the authority of all Jewish and Christian antiquity, forbids us to attempt to trace any article of belief or of practice among the heathen, to Hebrew sources. It has always appeared to me, that more dogmatism than discretion has been employed in the controversy, which has led to the establishment of this opinion. When we reflect upon the state of knowledge, and upon the means of literary intercourse in ancient times, we allow our opinions, perhaps, to be formed too much from considerations drawn from our own present social condition. We are apt to think, that before the art of printing, or the facilities of written correspondence existed, society was in the same state, in which it would now be, were that art and those facilities to be suddenly lost. Whereas, in those days, when every man's library was his memory, and the preservation of knowledge, and of literary productions of every kind, depended almost wholly upon oral communications, the faculties of recollection, of attention, and of observation, were cultivated, to a degree of strength of which we can hardly conceive. The necessary cultivation of these particular faculties, caused every traveller to bring home as much informa-

tion as is now collected by the most careful journalist ; and, at the same time, the comparative infrequency of travelling awakened a much higher degree of curiosity, and procured more kindness and hospitality to the stranger. From what we know, and can reasonably imagine, of the condition of society in antiquity, with which, however, we have the prospect of a more intimate acquaintance, by means of the agitation, at present attempted, of the Homeric controversy, I cannot believe that Plato, and other philosophers, could have travelled so extensively, as they did, in the East, without learning much concerning the renowned and extraordinary nation of the Jews. And I am fully convinced, that there can be no more curious and instructive course of investigation, than lies open to inquisitive and learned men, in the connexion between heathen opinions and phraseology, and their sources in the Hebrew scriptures, customs, and idioms.*

A very large part, indeed, of the Grecian Mythology, as well as Philosophy, had its origin in an ignorance of the idiom of the Oriental languages ; in taking it invariably in a proper and literal sense ; and in supposing a similarity of meaning, where there was only a similarity of phraseology. It will be worth our while to mention an instance of this kind of misinterpretation of Eastern idioms. In Genesis ix. 20, the idea of *husbandman*, is expressed in this manner ; ‘Noah began to be a man of the earth,’ *ἦ ἀνὴρ τῆς γῆς*. The mythologists, accordingly, make Saturn, who corres-

* Brucker's Hist. Phil. Appendix, p. 585.

ponds with Noah, to be the *husband* of Rhea, which is the same with the *earth*.* In like manner, it is reasonable to suppose, that the Greeks, perceiving that the Jews spoke of the Divine manifestations, which had been made to them, under the name of *The Logos*, (which meant *reason* as well as *word*,) of the Lord, would, without inquiring into the meaning of the phrase, be led by the correspondency between it and that phrase, by which they designated the second person of their trinity, *The Mind or Reason of the Divine Nature*, to believe, that it meant the same thing, and to adopt it accordingly into use. This conjecture is abundantly and lamentably verified by the circumstances, as they actually occurred.

As the expression, 'The Logos of the Lord,' gradually became adopted into the religions of all the surrounding nations, and as, when thus adopted, it invariably was used to signify a distinct being, a strong probability arises, that the Jews themselves would also be imperceptibly led to associate with it such an idea, and to regard it as the title of a separate Divine existence or person.

Having thrown out these several conjectures, I will now proceed to notice the actual evidence, which has come down to us, respecting the various opinions and speculations prevalent at the commencement of the christian era. This evidence, although scattered, and dislocated, when collected and put together, sheds a good degree of light upon the condition of sects and

* Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 366.

doctrines at that time.* A leading doctrine was, that this world was not created by the supreme God ; nor by the Logos of the Jews ; nor by the Intellectual Principle of Plato ; but by angels, inferior in character and dignity, or, as some thought, by a single angel of preeminent rank, whom they called Demiurgus. The purpose, for which this scheme was invented, was to relieve the Supreme Being and his Logos, or the Intellectual Principle, from the imputation of being the authors of evil. There was nothing that puzzled the ancient philosophers so much, as the existence of sin and suffering in the world. The great question, which they anxiously revolved in their private meditations was this, '*Unde malum et quare?*'† Whence, and wherefore the existence of evil ?

It had long been the opinion of the philosophers, that matter was the source and foundation of evil. From this sprang the doctrine, that Christ, the Son of God, had not an actual human body of flesh and blood, but that his form was either made of some purer and more ethereal substance, or else was a mere phantom or apparition. A similar notion had been entertained by Epicurus.‡ It was also asserted, that there existed a large number of spiritual beings, called Æons, or Emanations, between the Supreme First Cause, and this world ; one deduced from another, but all originally derived from him. Concerning the number

* Vitringa's *Obser. Sac. lib. v. c. x. xi. xii. xiii.*; Marsh's *Michaelis*, Vol. IV. p. 287; Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, Cen. 1, p. ii. c. v.

† Tertullian, *adver. Heres. ch. vii.*

‡ J. Jones's *Illustrations*, Pref. p. xvi. note.

and appropriate offices and titles of these beings, Irenæus says, they had different opinions.* There were *Thought, Foreknowledge, Incorruption, Life, Light*, and almost innumerable others.† Some believed in two coeternal first causes which they called God and Matter; the one the origin of good, the other the fountain of evil.

Besides all these, we have evidence of the existence of another opinion at that time. It was this; that the God of the Jews was either the angel, or one of the body of angels to whom the creation of the world was ascribed; that, under the administration of this angel, the God of the Jews, called by them 'The Logos of the Lord,' men were detained in sin and darkness, and kept from the knowledge and service of the Supreme and Benevolent First Cause; that this Supreme Being sent Jesus Christ, who was one of the first and most exalted of creatures, derived from him, and who was clothed with a body of a celestial substance, to overthrow and supersede the government of the God of the Jews, to whom men had before looked up, as to their supreme ruler; to make known unto them, for the first time, the existence of his Father, the first cause of everything true and good, and to prepare them, by a course of discipline, and by a constant contemplation of him, for a translation to a nearer communion with this all perfect Being, where, liberated, from flesh and all evil, they would pass a blessed immortality.

* Vitringa, lib. v. p. 150.

† Lowman's Three Tracts, p. 224.

The histories which remain, inform us of the existence of certain distinct sects, under their several leaders, who, during the lives of the apostles, went astray from the truth, in the prevailing spirit of wild speculation and fanciful invention. There were the followers of Simon Magus,* and of Menander,† the Nicolaitans,‡ and the disciples of Cerinthus.|| Accounts of these sects have been preserved to us, principally by Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius. Their opinions were severally compounded, for the most part, of some of those already mentioned. The leading doctrine of Cerinthus is deserving of notice. He believed that Jesus had a common human nature, until the time of his baptism, when the most exalted of *Æons*, the first begotten *Nēs* of Plato, descended upon him from the opening heavens, dwelt with him in union with his mortal nature, and passed off from him, and ascended to the *Pleroma* or upper heavens, previous to his crucifixion. This opinion is justly thought to have been the origin of the doctrine, or rather the artifice of the *two natures*, which is still extensively maintained, and which will continue to be maintained, as long as men are disposed to contend for the doctrine of the equality of Jesus with the Father, in opposition to his own clear, positive, and often repeated declarations. Although it destroys the testimony and credibility of our Saviour, by imputing to him the

* Mosheim, Cen. 1. p. li. c. v.; Vitringa, lib. v. p. 153; Acts viii. 9, 10; J. Jones, Illustrations, Pref.

† Mosheim, Cen. 1. p. li. c. v.; Vitringa, lib. v. p. 153.

‡ Ibid. Rev. ii. 6. 15.

|| Mosheim, Cen. 1. p. li. c. v.; Vitringa, lib. v. p. 156.

habitual practice of speaking on the most important subjects, and of answering the most earnest and anxious inquiries, with a concealed and double meaning to his words, which it is only given to the initiated faithful to understand; still, notwithstanding all this, we cannot expect that this unscriptural principle of interpretation, mere subterfuge and human contrivance as it is, will be disused or rejected, while the followers of Christ, in the madness of controversy, are found willing to sacrifice the morality of his character, to save the divinity of his nature.

In addition to this direct evidence, concerning the condition of the various sects, and schemes of doctrine, in the apostolic age, there is another source of information, more copious, perhaps, than any other. We possess detailed accounts of systems of error, prevalent in the early part of the second century. There were, among others, the sects of Saturnilus, of Basilides, of Valentinus, of Ptolemæus, of Heracleon; and of Marcion,* the elements of whose several tenets were unquestionably derived from the Gnostics of the first century.† The most eminent of those sectaries were Basilides and Valentinus, who are said by Epiphanius‡ to have boasted that they received their doctrines, the one from Glaucia, a friend and disciple of Peter, the other from Theodades, a follower of Paul. This coincides with other evidence to this point,|| and demonstrates, that the opinions of these false teachers,

* Mosheim, Cen. 2, p. ii. c. v.

† Vitringa, lib. v. p. 164. ‡ Ibid. p. 161.

|| Tertullian de Heret. c. 34, 35, p. 244.

fabricated by them into new combinations, or otherwise wrought into systems, had existed together, or in a separate state, long before their day, and in the first age of the christian church. We can therefore infer from their system, with great certainty, what opinions were prevalent and propagated at the time of the apostles, against which John may be supposed to have written.

The following was a part of the scheme of Basilides, according to the testimony of Irenæus and Epiphanius.*

I.

ΤΟ ΑΓΕΝΝΗΤΟΝ, 'Ο ΜΟΝΟΣ ΕΣΤΙ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΠΑΤΗΡ.

THE UNBEGOTTEN, WHO ALONE IS FATHER OF ALL.

II.

ΝΟΥΣ.

PLATO'S SECOND PRINCIPLE.

III.

ΛΟΓΟΣ.

WORD OR REASON.

IV.

ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ.

UNDERSTANDING.

V.

ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ.

STRENGTH.

ΣΟΦΙΑ.

WISDOM.

VI.

ΑΡΧΑΙ.

PRINCIPALITIES.

ΕΞΟΥΣΙΑΙ.

POWERS.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΙ.

ANGELS.

* Vitringa, lib. v. p. 165; Lardner's History of the Heretics, p. 74.

VII.

Ὁ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΩΤΟΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ.

THE UPPER AND FIRST HEAVEN.

‘From these proceeded,’ says Lardner, ‘other angels and other heavens, to the number 365, both angels and heavens.’

This will serve as a specimen of the wildness and absurdity which characterised the speculations of philosophers at that time. We see that one supreme source of all things is recognised. But the ‘Logos,’ or Word, whatever may have been meant by it, was not the only begotten, neither was it the first begotten of all creatures. It was not even considered as deriving its being immediately from God, but from the second principle of Plato. In the sixth link of the chain of descent, we find an explanation of several passages in scripture, the force of which we have not heretofore been fully able to perceive, such as the following.

Rom. viii. 38, 39. ‘For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, *nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,* nor things present, nor things to come, *nor height, nor depth,* nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

Ephes. i. 20, 21, 22. ‘And set him at his own right hand in *the heavenly places,* far above *all principality, and power, and might,* and dominion, and *every name that is named,* not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.’

Coloss. i. 15, 16. 'Who is the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn of every creature*; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or *principalities, or powers.*'
 ii. 10. 'Which is the head of *all principality and power.*'
 15. 'Having spoiled *principalities and powers,*' &c.

The scheme of Valentinus is another illustration of the kind of philosophy to which the world was then given up.* It is even more complex than the one just presented. It is described by Irenæus and Tertullian. It consists of thirty emanations or spiritual beings, regularly descending from each other. The following are the first eight.†

I.

ΒΥΘΟΣ.
 THE PROFOUND,
 sometimes called
 ΗΠΟΑΡΧΗ,
 or
 ΑΡΧΗ.

ΣΙΓΗ.
 SILENCE,
 sometimes called
 ΕΝΝΟΙΑ,
 sometimes also
 ΧΑΡΙΣ.

II.

ΝΟΥΣ.
 MIND,
 described as
 ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗΣ,
 or as
 ΠΡΩΤΟΓΕΝΗΣ.

ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ.
 TRUTH.

* Tertullian adver. Valen. c. viii. pp. 292, 293.

† Vitrings, lib. v. p. 166; Le Platonisme Devoilé, Part I. ch. viii.; Brucker's Hist. Phil. Tom. III. p. 294.

III.

ΛΟΓΟΣ.
REASON OR WORD.

ΖΩΗ.
LIFE.

IV.

ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ.
MAN.

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ.
CHURCH.

After having seen these two schemes of divine genealogy, we can understand what Paul means, 1 Tim. i. 4. 'Neither give heed to *fables, and endless genealogies*, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith;' vi. 20. 'Avoiding *profane and vain babblings*, and *oppositions of science* falsely so called;' and also to what Peter alludes, 2d Epis. i. 16. 'We have not followed *cunningly devised fables*;' ii. 1. 'There shall be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies;' 3. 'And through covetousness shall they, with *feigned words*, make merchandise of you.' *

In this system also, the 'Logos' is neither the only nor the first begotten. It is worthy of remark, that, in both these schemes, Λογος and Νεος, which are frequently found in connexions which determine that they were applied to the same object, the second principle of Plato, are separated from each other, and made to

* An examination of these systems of opinion will enable us to explain, or at least to throw new light upon, much of the phraseology of the New Testament, such as the use of the words '*truth*,' '*life*,' '*light*,' '*beginning*,' &c., as they are found in the writings of John. We may also conjecture with some satisfaction, the meaning of such expressions as '*heavenly places*,' in the Epistle to the Ephesians, i. 3, 20, and iii. 10, by observing the seventh step in the series of Basilides.

bear different significations. Whether this arose from the tendency of the times to make the chain of descent in these genealogies as long as possible, or from a knowledge of the truth, that they originally belonged to different systems, the one to the Hebrew, and the other to the Platonic, cannot, perhaps, be ascertained.

The origin and first cause of all things is a very strange and fanciful conception. Infinite Space and Silence! The word *Bēthos*, probably meant, not merely the depths of the ocean, but the abyss of space, the unfathomable height, and breadth, and depth of the surrounding heavens. The word 'profound' is used in this sense in a passage of Pope's admirable translation of Homer, which passage, by the way, is one of the finest instances in our language, of the skilful adaptation of the sound to the sense of the words ;

———' but Jove with awful sound,
Rolled the big thunder o'er the vast profound.'
Iliad, book viii. 161.

That this is the meaning of 'profound,' in this place, is confirmed by the following passage in Virgil, which evidently conveys the same idea intended to be expressed by Pope.

' Hic pater omnipotens ter cælo clarus ab alto,
Intonuit.'

Æneid, vii. 141.

Besides all these, there were the disciples of Philo the Jew, an eloquent and famous man in the first age of the church. Eusebius gives a catalogue of his numerous works. He calls him 'deepe of understanding, high and profound in the contemplation of

holy scriptures.’* In another place, he gives this description of him; ‘About this time Philo did flourish, a man not onely excelling our owne men, but also such as passed in prophane knowledge; he was by lineall descent an Ebrue borne, inferior to none of them, which excelled at Alexandria. But what labour and industrie he hath employed in divine discipline, and the profit of his native countrey, his workes now extant plainly do declare, and how farre forth he prevayled in philosophicall and liberall artes, of profane knowledge, I suppose it not very needefull to repeate. But imitating the trade of Plato and Pythagoras, he is sayd to have excelled all the learned of his time.’ Amidst the variety of opinions respecting this remarkable man, all agree in attributing to him the praise of genius, eloquence, and erudition. It is not exactly known to what original school he most inclined, whether to the Grecian, the Jewish, or the Oriental. He seems to have been imbued with the wisdom and the lore of them all. Some, indeed, especially a late most ingenious and learned English theologian,† have believed that he was a Christian. His Theology seems to have embraced the idea of one God. He makes frequent use of the term Logos,‡ and from some specimens which have been pointed out, of his mode of speaking of it, he seems to have approached, if he did not reach

* I quote Eusebius, as he appears in an excellent old English black-letter translation, of a succession of Ecclesiastical writers, beginning with him, by Meredith Hanmer, D. D. London. 1585. pp. 21, 30.

† John Jones.

‡ Vitringa, p. 143; Brucker’s Hist. Phil. Tom. II. p. 808.

a very rational, if not just conception of its meaning. In cases, where it could only signify the Divine perfections in the abstract, it is spoken of as an *agent*. In one place, he declares it to be only the *creative principle*, *δυναμις καὶ δημιουργητικὴ*. He also declares, that it was seated in the Divine mind, and could not have a separate existence; that it was not a distinct being from Jehovah, but that he alone was the maker of all things, and had no assistance in the execution of his designs; *μονὴ δὲ αὐτοῦ χρησάμενος Θεός.**

* J. Jones's Illustrations, pp. 12, 13. The view of the Logos, here attributed to Philo, is essentially the view which Unitarian writers have in general received and advocated. The cause which led to the Trinitarian hypothesis concerning it, is to be found in the prevailing tendency, already largely described, in the first age of the church, and in the ages immediately preceding its foundation, to give a personal existence to every physical and moral principle, and, in fact, to every abstract conception of the mind. It is evident that a reviewer, in a late Monthly Repository, (N. S. Vol. I. No. 7), is correct in saying, that the only reason why Tertullian opposed the doctrine of his Unitarian antagonist Praxeas, was, that, on account of the influence of the delusion just referred to, upon his habits of thinking, he could not bring his mind to conceive of an attribute of God in any other light, than as a person or being distinct from God. His account of the Logos is worthy of quotation. 'Ante omnia enim,' says he, 'Deus erat solus. Ipse sibi et mundus et locus et omnia. Solus autem; quia nihil aliud extrinsecus præter illum. Cæterum, ne tunc quidem solus; habebat enim secum, quam habebat in semetipso, rationem suam, scilicet. Rationalis enim Deus, et ratio in ipso prius; et ita, ab ipso omnia. Quæ ratio, sensus ipsius est. Hanc Græci Λόγον dicunt, quo vocabulo etiam Sermonem appellamus. Ideoque jam in usu est nostrorum, per simplicitatem interpretationis, Sermonem dicere in primordia apud Deum fuisse, cum magis rationem competat antiquiorem haberi; quia non sermonalis a principio, sed rationalis Deus etiam ante principium.' Adver. Prax. c. v. p. 637. It is most clear, from this passage, that Tertullian meant, by Logos, an essential attribute of God, the intellectual and rational principle of

There was a body of sectarians in the apostolic age, calling themselves the followers of John the Baptist. They were, strictly speaking, a heresy from Christianity, and were made up of those who wished to undermine it, by perverting its principles. Michaelis gives an interesting account of them under the name of Sabians.*

Finally, there were the Serpentists, mentioned by Tertullian and Origen.† They held the belief of the union of two natures in our Saviour. As Christ, they affected to honor him as divine; but, as Jesus, they regarded him as a man. As a singular practical inference from this doctrine, they denounced, anathematized, and excommunicated him, as Jesus, in his human capacity. Origen says, that ‘they did not admit any into their society, unless he would first *deposit curses against Jesus.*’ A knowledge of the existence of this extraordinary doctrine and practice, throws light upon the language of Paul, in these two instances at least; 1 Corin. xii. 3. ‘Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, *calleth Jesus accursed.*’ xvi. 22. ‘If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *anathema.*’

The conjecture was thrown out, page 56, that the Jews were induced to personify their phrase, ‘The

his own original nature. It is worthy our notice, too, that he considered ‘The Word,’ an improper translation of Logos, and that it should be rendered, as all Unitarian writers have maintained, ‘Reason,’ or ‘Wisdom.’

* Michaelis, Intro. Vol. III. ch. vii. sec. 4.

† Tertullian adver. Heret. ch. xlvii. p. 250; J. Jones’s Illus. Pref. xiv. xviii.; Mosheim, Cen. II. Part. II. ch. v. For an account of the estimation in which the ancients held the serpent, see the Ophion, a curious work, lately published (1811) by John Bellamy, London.

Logos of the Lord,' through the influence of the opinions and practices of the surrounding nations. This conjecture was founded upon the considerations there mentioned, and upon the knowledge of the character of their Doctors or Rabbis, who do not appear to have been indisposed to keep pace with the rest of the world, in fanciful speculations and inventions. Evidence is spread throughout the New Testament, that the people of Judea were given up to gross superstition; and it is well understood, that, in accordance with the practice in every heathen system into which it had gained admission, they had personified and given a distinct, substantive, and personal existence to the word 'Logos.' *

We have now completed our survey of the condition of the world, as it respects religious and philosophical opinions, in the apostolic age, and of the causes which led to that condition.† Any reader of judgment will be able, from what has been spread before him in these pages, to imagine what kind of notions were most likely to be connected with the word Logos, as it passed from the Jewish into the Heathen systems. He will see, indeed, what were the meanings attached

L.A.

* Rosenmuller, John *¶*; Le Clerc's *Epistola Critica*, ix. I shall notice hereafter Lowman's argument to prove that the word 'Angel' did not originally imply a personal existence or being, but that the Jews personified it in the same manner in which they personified 'Logos.'

† A large amount of rich and instructive speculation, on almost all the subjects touched upon in this, and the previous Letter, may be found in the '*Memoires de l'Academie de Littérature*,' Tom. xlv. xlvii. l. li. lvi. lvii.

to it in some of the most fashionable theories, at the time when the evangelist undertook to remove from it all erroneous significations, and to explain, in brief and concise language, the sense in which it ought to be understood. I am led to believe that the foregoing collection of opinions will afford essential assistance in illustrating many other passages of scripture, besides that, the interpretation of which is the principal object of our present inquiry. In the remaining Letters, I shall endeavour to point out the *true* meaning of the word Logos, as used in the Proem of John's Gospel, and to apply it to the interpretation of that difficult and important passage, and to such other parts and expressions of scripture, as it may most obviously affect, either by explaining what is difficult, or elucidating what is dark. Before we enter upon this part of our design, I must be allowed to give utterance to a few reflections, which are called to my mind, by a review of the ground over which we have passed.

1. In the first place, I am struck with an increased conviction of the necessity of a revelation. There certainly would have appeared to be some ground for hope, at that period when the most intelligent members of society began to perceive the falsity and the folly of idolatry and polytheism, when they began to give countenance and currency to the practice of rejecting the belief of the personal existence of their gods, when they attempted to aspire to the contemplation, and to rise up to the knowledge of the true system of the universe, and, especially, when they approached the discovery of the great truth, that the

principles and powers, whom they had regarded as beings of a personal nature, were intellectual abstractions only,—there was surely ground for the hope, at that time, that mankind might be gradually persuaded, and led on, from one degree of instruction to another, to the final reception of those simple, but grand articles of faith, the Unity, Supremacy, Spirituality, Omnipresence, and moral perfections of the Deity, which are now established by revelation. But we see, in the miserable absurdities, which we have reviewed, the actual melancholy result to which learning and philosophy brought the world, when they had overthrown the ancient superstitions. The experiment commenced under auspicious omens. The most exalted minds were raised up, as it were, for the very purpose of conducting it. Favorable circumstances of all kinds seemed to conspire. Knowledge and refinement were carried to a height, on all subjects of moral speculation, taste, and science, which if reached, has not been passed by the moderns. The foundations of error and idolatry, in every nation, so far as they were laid in the public faith and confidence, were shaken. The progress of conquest had thrown down all barriers, and, by gathering the whole civilized world into one empire, had brought all the intelligence and philosophy of the times, within the reach of every inquiring individual, and caused the concentrated lights of wisdom to shine with unobstructed radiance upon all within its wide boundaries. It is impossible to conceive of a fairer, more promising opportunity for the trial of the great question, whether

man can, without a star on high, a light from above to guide him, escape from the darkness and the snares of error, and reach the firm ground, and the clear sunshine of truth. The trial was made, and it failed. The progress of opinion, instead of leading upwards to the simplicity, towards which it had at first advanced, was soon turned back, and before the gospel had gained sufficient strength effectually to check its downward course, it had descended to the ridiculous fancies and the wretched fables, specimens of which have just been presented to our view.

2. My next reflection is upon the strength of the argument in favor of the truth and divinity of our religion, arising from its internal character. When we have been contemplating the religious condition of the world, at the time of our Saviour, and considering the infinite number, and variety of those theories, to which a spirit of wild, rash, and fanciful speculation had given existence ; when we ponder upon the universal diffusion of superstition and error among all classes, especially the higher and more intellectual classes, we must recognise, with new astonishment and increased confidence, the argument in favor of the divinity of the mission, and the truth of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth, arising from the simplicity, originality, and vast, immeasurable superiority of his character, principles, and doctrines. Viewing this argument in the light in which it is now presented to us, we cannot but exclaim, in the involuntary, instinctive language of the admiring and subdued Rousseau, ' Yes ; if the life and death of Socrates are those of

a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God. Shall we say, that the history of the gospel is invented at pleasure? My friend, it is not thus that men invent. It would be more inconceivable, that a number of men should forge this book in concert, than that one should furnish the subject of it. Jewish authors would never have devised such a manner, and such morality; and the gospel has characters of truth so great, so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that its inventor would be still more astonishing than its hero.' But even this testimony, strong and earnest as it, is not adequate to the expression of the force and depth of our conviction. We can only utter it in the unrivalled language of scripture. 'Never man spake like this man.' Never without illumination from on high, unless the Father had been with him, could man have thus spoken.

3. A review of the ground over which we have passed, impresses me, in the third place, with a sense of the propriety and necessity of great caution in the interpretation of doubtful words and passages in scripture. We are admonished not to attempt to establish important doctrines upon phrases or sentences, the meaning of which is not clear and certain. There was such a vast variety of errors floating about in the community, when the scriptures of the New Testament were written, and against which, it is reasonable to suppose, their authors were anxious to preserve the church, of which we are, and probably must always continue to be ignorant, that we should be prepared to meet with much, in their language and arguments, which we

cannot understand, and should be slow to arrogate to ourselves the ability to interpret and explain.

4. Lastly, we are enabled by the inquiry, in which we have been engaged, to account for the errors and corruptions, with which the truth so soon became overshadowed. Instead of astonishment, that they were so numerous, we are filled with wonder and gratitude, that so few obtained admission to the doctrines of the infant church. When we consider the facilities which existed previous to the art of printing, and the modes of preserving and multiplying accurate copies of documents, afforded by that art, for interpolating, and altering, and thus rendering doubtful the true reading of written records, and the great liability to errors of transcription ; and, in connexion with this view of the subject, reflect upon the incalculable number of theories and systems then advocated, with a zeal which threw the whole mass of society into a state of moral distraction, in which ardent partisans would not hesitate to do anything to give additional authority to their own tenets ;—we cannot but be surprised and thankful, that our scriptures have passed down to us, through all these dangers, so much more pure from fraudulent admixtures, and free from accidental variations, than could have been expected. And while we are clearly instructed in what manner to account for many errors, which now prevail, by observing the earnestness with which early converts endeavoured to conciliate to the religion which they had espoused, the favor of those schools of Philosophy, the external communion of which they had de-

serted, by using all their ingenuity and eloquence to draw them closer together, to conceal as far as possible the points in which they differed, to exaggerate those in which they agreed, and to sum up the whole, to make Plato and Jesus mutually and reciprocally expound, and reflect, and in every point resemble each other*—while we are thus informed, with re-

* Whether in the rage, which prevailed in the primitive times, to run a parallel between Jesus and Plato, the currency of a story, respecting the mode of birth of the latter, (Stanley's *Lives*, Pref. p. 161.) did not lead, not merely to the corruption of the doctrine of the church, but to a bold and high handed interpolation of the text of scripture, is a question to be decided by the laborious examination, and the sound discretion of the biblical scholar. That such interpolations and corruptions of the text were perpetrated, before the time of Tertullian, he most distinctly declares, (*De Heret.* ch. 88. p. 246.) 'Alius manu scripturas, alius sensus expositione intervertit.' This same instructive and valuable writer, after having, in another place, (*De Heret.* ch. 7, p. 233.) traced many of the false doctrines of his time to their heathen sources, in the following animated manner complains of, and reproveth the disposition among Christians to mix with their belief the doctrines of the philosophers; 'Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid Academiæ et Ecclesiæ? Quid hæreticis Christianis? Viderent qui Stoicum, et Platonicum, et Dialecticum Christianismum protulerunt nobis, curiositate opus non est post Christum Jesum, nec inquisitione post Evangelium.' The most striking testimony anywhere to be found, perhaps, in proof of the tendency of the early Christians towards Gentile errors and usages, is afforded by Tertullian in his work on Idolatry, (ch. 14. p. 118.) in a passage, in which he contrasts, in a spirit of reproach and regret, this trait in their character, with the superior fidelity to their religion, and selfrespect of the Heathen worshippers; 'O melior fides nationum in suam sectam, quæ nullum solennitatem Christianorum sibi vindicat! non Dominicum diem, non Pentecosten, etiam si nossent, nobiscum communicassent; timerent enim ne Christiani viderentur. Nos, ne Ethnici pronuntiemur, non veremur.' For further illustrations of the view here taken of the tendency of the early Christians to adopt the opinions of the schools of Philosophy, see Priestley's *History of Early Opinions*.

spect to the copious sources of early errors, we cannot but wonder that the truth was not wholly overwhelmed and lost. Most surely, if it had been of man, it would soon have perished. But it was of God, and it survived. It still lives, and enlightens the world, and we have the blessed assurance, that nothing shall prevail against it.

LETTER V.

IN a previous passage, note to page 76, I have spoken of the meaning attached, by many Unitarian, and also by some Trinitarian writers, to the word Logos; and we have seen that they are supported by the authority of Tertullian. It has been maintained by them, that the true signification of Logos, is the *wisdom* or the *reason* of God; that it implies one or more of his moral attributes. This interpretation, although infinitely more satisfactory than that proposed by Trinitarians, has never appeared to me altogether sufficient or acceptable. The objections which present themselves are various.

1. In the first place, the opinion that Logos or The Word is a personification of one or of several of the attributes of God, has by far too much of a philosophic aspect, and amounts, in fact and precisely, either to the second or to the first principle of Plato, according to the attribute it is supposed to mean. This consideration assumes its proper force, when we reflect how entirely averse from the genius of the old and the new dispensations, the spirit of heathen speculation ever was. Indeed, it is not reasonable to suppose, that John would have fallen in with, or countenanced in any way, the error which was at the very foundation of every prevailing system of Pagan Philosophy, and which had led to the personification, and the deifi-

cation, not only of every divine attribute, but of every general and abstract idea.

2. In the second place, it is as unphilosophical, and as contrary to the true idea of God, to suppose any of his attributes personified in a particular object, or confined to a particular spot, as it is to suppose God himself personified in any object or form, which is idolatry; or confined within given limits, which is error equally gross and absurd. For every essential attribute of God must coexist with his nature, throughout its whole extension; that is, must be considered as necessarily omnipresent. If the contrary opinion were admissible, we might consider one attribute as residing, or as comprehended in a particular person or thing, and another attribute, in another person or thing; and, since the only apprehension we can have of God, consists in a conception of his several attributes, we should in this manner lose, at last, all idea of the truth of his omnipresent being. This was unquestionably the process by which men gradually departed from the simple and original belief of the one true God. They personified, first one attribute, and then another, until they had given a distinct existence, in their imaginations, to all the several aspects of his character, when, of course, nothing remained of the original conception they had formed of him. It had been divided into different parts, and distributed in various directions, until it had become entirely exhausted and used up.

3. In the third place, it is not settled which of the attributes of God is personified by Logos. Some

suppose it to be his *reason*, some his *wisdom*, and his *mercy* or *goodness* might be equally well supposed. If more than one be meant, it is equally doubtful which, and how many enter into the combination. Different passages seem to require different interpretations. And the result has been a great inconsistency and diversity of opinion, among the advocates of this mode of viewing the Logos, or Word. This consideration certainly amounts to a strong objection to its admission.

4. In the fourth place, there are passages in which Logos is used, to the explanation of which this interpretation can in no manner be applied. The instances of the use of the word in the sense which may be called its technical sense, are quite numerous in the New, and not unfrequent in the Old Testament, but are noticed hardly at all, in consequence of the simplicity and naturalness of the technical meaning. The mind so readily gathers, from the connexion, the proper ideas attached to it, that it does not perceive that it is used in any other than a popular sense. But, in the Proem of John's Gospel, it is introduced in so abrupt and peculiar a manner, that we are led to suspect, that it bears a deeper and weightier meaning than elsewhere. There can be no doubt, however, that, in such instances as the following, it is used in a sense equally remote from its common or popular acceptance. 2 Thess. iii. 1. 'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word, or Logos, of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.' 2 Tim. ii. 9. 'But the Word, or Logos of God, *is not bound*.' 1 John i. 1. 'That which was

from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have *seen with our eyes*, which we have *looked upon*, and our hands have *handled* of the Word, or the Logos, of life.' In such passages as these, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to apply the interpretation we are now considering, to Logos, or the Word, without rendering the sentences wholly unintelligible.

But my last objection to this mode of interpretation, and such should be the last objection in all cases of this kind, is what I believe to be a more satisfactory explanation and exposition of the meaning of the Logos, as used by John and the other scripture writers. I proceed, therefore, to attempt to delineate and develop the view, in which I think it should be regarded.

I begin by observing, that the meaning of any word or phrase is always to be sought, and can only be discovered, in the sources from which its use originated. Logos is a Jewish expression. To the Jews must we go to ascertain its import. Inquirers and writers on this subject have, in general, failed to establish the true interpretation, by directing all their researches to the heathen systems, in which the Logos is used, instead of descending beyond them to the Hebrew Theology, from which they borrowed it. It has been asserted, page 29, that, at a certain period, it was the current practice among the Jews, to speak of all manifestations, communications, and revelations from God, as made, not by God, or the Lord, but by his Logos, or Word. It has also been attempted to be shown, in what manner the heathens, who became acquainted with this expression, and, at last, many of

the Jews themselves were gradually led to consider, that another and a different being from the supreme original Jehovah, was understood by the phrase, 'The Word of the Lord.'

A modern school of divines have adhered to this opinion, and have maintained, that the divine nature of our Saviour was this very Logos; that he created the world, and that it is this being who acted in all the communications made to the Jews; and who, besides this, has the entire control, and conducts throughout the administration of the affairs of the world. In order to determine the truth or the error of this opinion, we must resort to the investigation of the system of Jewish Theology, as preserved in their sacred records, and from them must be gathered the true meaning of the abovementioned phrase. As has been repeatedly observed, it was applied to the Divine manifestations and interpositions. Our first inquiry, then, is concerning these Divine manifestations and interpositions.

There are two views in which they are capable of being regarded. One is, that the spiritual being, who acted, or was concerned in them, was the Supreme God himself. The other is, that they were the appearances of some inferior spirit, of an intelligent agent, different from the Supreme God, but personating him as his messenger or angel. On the one side, it is believed, that Jehovah himself, without the instrumentality of any other spiritual being, did appear in the visible symbols, and the audible voices of the several divine manifestations, called, in general, Shekinah.

‘They,* who apprehend these appearances to have been the proper and real appearances of the true God, do not mean, as if thereby God did or could become visible in his own proper nature, which, as spiritual, is for that reason absolutely invisible. Nor do they suppose, that an infinite spirit could possibly move from one place to another, or leave one place for another where he was not before. They only mean, that God did, on some particular occasions, manifest himself to others, by some special and particular actions, which he designed should be taken as the marks and evidence of some special and particular presence.’† On the other side, it is maintained, that these Divine ‘appearances were the proper appearances of some inferior spirit;’ that in them ‘some angel or the preexisting soul of the Messiah, being sent by God, in his name on some message, speaks and acts as in the person of God, using his name and authority.’ A noble and popular writer in defence of this latter opinion, thus expresses himself; ‘It was the Word, who made all the great appearances and manifestations of God’s will to our first parents, to the patriarchs, and

* I here quote Lowman’s first Tract. So much use will be made, in this part of our investigation, of his language and arguments, that no particular reference will, in general, be made to him; in cases of quotation without reference, the reader will understand that we are indebted to him.

† Lowman quotes the following passage from Bishop Bull to the same effect; p. 2. ‘Deus igitur, qui Moſen e rubo ardentis allocutus est, non aliter apparuit, quam Deum decuit; hoc est, non de loco in locum tranſeundo, aut ita ut loci alicujus anguſtiis clauderetur, ſed ſpeciem viſibilem, atque audibilem vocem efformando, ſeſe propheta ſancto manifeſtavit.’ De. Fid. Nic. Sect. IV. c. iii. s. 5.

to the Israelitish people. But we must always carry it along with us, that he, that is, the Word, never acted or spoke in his own name, but in the name of the Most High, whom he personated as his angel, acting as his chief minister or messenger, and by his authority, without any authority of his own.*

The learned and judicious Lowman, whom we must follow in the progress of our present inquiry, for he has marked out the ground in such a skilful manner, that it will be impossible to improve upon him, presents, in the first place, and at the outset, three general considerations against the latter of these two opinions, which will now be offered to the reader's examination.

1. In the first place, 'there are several characters given to these appearances, that in strictness and full propriety, do only belong to the true God.' Titles of supremacy are ascribed to the person who appears in them, such as the '*Lord of Hosts*,' the '*Almighty God*,' '*Jehovah*,' '*I am that I am*.' The whole church are required to acknowledge him as their head, as the Lord their God, and they are most solemnly forbidden to recognise any other god. 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' † The unity of the Divine Being is the fundamental article of the Jewish religion; and it is certainly everywhere plain that the God who appeared to the Jews was this one God. This is expressly and most carefully declared in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple.‡ 'And he

* Lord Barrington's Essay on the several Dispensations of God to Mankind. Addend. p. 180.

† Exodus, xx. 8.

‡ 2 Chron. vi. 12, 14, 18, seqq.

stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands, and said ; O Jehovah, God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in the heaven, nor in the earth.' 'It is plain,' says Lowman, 'that Solomon meant this his prayer, should be directed to the one true God, to that infinite Being, whose presence is universal ; though yet, in a good sense, he was also peculiarly present in his temple. To this presence it is that he immediately directs his prayer.' 'But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. How much less this house, which I have built. Have respect, therefore, to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Jehovah, my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee ; that thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, and upon the place whereof thou hast said, that thou wouldest put thy name there ; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place. Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place. Hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven, and when thou hearest, forgive.'

2. In the second place, there is no room for the supposition, that the spiritual being, who appeared in the Shekinah, was the representative of Jehovah, and therefore used his name. The scriptures do not afford the least shadow of evidence in its support. And it is highly improbable that, if there had been such a

representation, no intimation would have been given of it; and that, in conveying and preserving a religion, the leading purpose of which was to make God known to men, a representative being should have been employed, who would serve to prevent the fulfilment of that purpose, by placing himself, as it were, between God and men, so as to conceal him entirely from their view.

3. In the third place, all the early Fathers are opposed to this notion of the representative character of the Shekinah. Lowman quotes Tertullian, and Irenæus, and Augustin, to this effect.

There are three arguments, on the other hand, which have been urged in defence of the opinion, that the miraculous appearances, made to the Jews, were appearances of some spirit inferior to Jehovah. These arguments I will now consider.

1. The first is stated in the following manner. The scriptures declare, that 'no man hath seen God at any time,' John i. 18. In Colossians i. 15, and in 1 Timothy, i. 17, he is called 'invisible,' and, in the 16th verse of the 6th chapter of the last mentioned Epistle, he is spoken of as 'dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see;' whereas the being, acting in the Shekinah, did become visible to the eyes, and audible to the ears of men. The answer to this argument is obvious. Whatever were the rank or character of the being employed in these appearances, the being itself did not appear. 'No spiritual being at all was properly seen or heard.' All that was subjected to

the observation of the senses, was the material symbols, which were the mere appendages and instruments of the Divine presence. 'It was only the voice of the oracle, or an articulate sound, that was heard, and only the cloud and the fire that were seen.' Strictly speaking, no spiritual being ever was, or ever can be seen. We do not see each others' spirits. We only see the outward material forms, which they actuate, and this was all that was seen in the Shekinah.

In order therefore to give the passages of scripture just quoted, any actual and intelligible meaning, we must resort to some other interpretation, than the supposition of a reference to bodily sight. It has been thought that inward, moral, or intellectual vision is spoken of. This is undoubtedly the true meaning of the above passages. John i. 18, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *declared* him.' In this verse, the declaration of the character of God by his Son is spoken of by way of opposition, or contrast, with the expression 'not seeing God.' The following passage appears to convey the same meaning, and to serve as an interpretation of the one just quoted. Matt. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' This interpretation is entirely confirmed by 3 John, 11. 'He that doeth evil hath not seen God,' and gives a beautiful simplicity and clearness to one of the beatitudes. Matt. v. 8. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

This was the sense in which the Jewish doctors understood the expressions we are now considering. Thus Maimonides explains the words of Jehovah to Moses, Exodus xxxiii. 20. 'Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.' He considers it to mean, that no one in this imperfect state, while in the body, '*quandiu corpore indutus,*' can arrive at a full understanding and apprehension of the character of God. He says that God calls such an apprehension of him 'his face,'—'*veram autem apprehensionem, visionem faciei appellavit.*' * We have reason to conclude, that, when rightly understood, the use of language in scripture, upon which the argument just considered is built, affords it no solid foundation.

2. Lowman presents the second argument in favor of the supposition of the agency of an inferior spirit in the manifestations of a Divine nature, made to the Jews, in the following words ;—' We must understand the appearance in the Shekinah of some spiritual being representing God, because it is ascribed to angels, and the appearance itself is often called in scripture, *the Angel of Jehovah*. This observation is by many thought to be decisive, and to show evidently that the person, who appeared, and used the style and title of Jehovah, in the appearance, could not be the true God himself, but some other spiritual being, sent from the true God, as his angel, or minister, to represent him. For no interpretation, it is presumed, will allow that the true God and his angel should be the same.' This

* Maimon. Porta Mosis, p. 230.

is the argument as it has been urged by its advocates. Its whole force, it will be perceived, is contained in the word *Angel*; and it entirely disappears before the proper interpretation of that word.

Now the original and the proper signification of *Angel*, does not embrace the idea of an intelligent spirit, but of *instrumentality* or *office* only. Maimonides, the great master of Jewish learning, expressly declares, that whoever, or whatever bears a message, or performs an office, is an Angel. * ‘Quivis, qui mandatum aliquod expedit, est *Angelus*, ita ut de motu animalium irrationalium etiam dicatur.’ Again, ‘Virtutes et facultates omnes sunt *Angeli*.’ He also affirms that such has been the interpretation of learned Jewish commentators. ‘Nostri sapientes autem omnibus prudentibus satis explicuerunt quamlibet facultatem corporalem esse *Angelum*.’ The decision of the Hebrew doctors on this point, is corroborated by the authority of the Samaritan School. They believed that whatever God employed, was called his Angel, in virtue of that employment. Reland, in his Dissertation concerning them, gives this important definition, as the one applied by them to the word *Angel*. ‘Porro, quum Deus suam virtutem corpori cuidam, sive instrumento, ita conjungit, ut illud animet, et in, et cum eo operetur; illud instrumentum *Angelus* iis appellatur.’

‘It is the concurrent opinion then of the Hebrew and Samaritan schools, that the word *Angel* does not only mean a spirit, but sometimes also, all sorts of powers, or instruments, which God shall be pleased to

* More Nevochim, P. II. c. vi.

use, and to act by. So that the elements of the world, fire and air, winds and storms, in particular visions, in the language of the scriptures are called, "Angels of the Lord, which do his will." 'The scriptures call a dream, a vision, a voice from Heaven, a plague, a burning wind, *Angels of the Lord*. Whatsoever God is pleased to do by them, is said to be done by an *Angel of the Lord*. Whatever declares God's will, or performs his pleasure, is his *Angel*.'

The Shekinah, or sensible manifestation of God's presence, and the oracle that proceeded from it, might each, in this sense, be called the *Angel of the Lord*. We may say, therefore, that the Angel of the Lord appeared, without supposing the agency of another spiritual being, than Jehovah himself. The visible appearance of the Shekinah, and the audible voice of the oracle, coming forth from it, were as properly Angels, in the language of scripture, as intelligent beings, or spirits would have been.

As we shall have further occasion to consider the word *Angel*, it may be worth our while to settle its meaning still more clearly. I think that its true definition is very nearly approached in the following quotation, which I find in Lowman, originally coming from Ambrose. 'Sciendum est quod Angelus est nomen *Officii*, non *Naturæ*. Quæris hujus Naturæ nomen? Spiritus est. Quæris *Officii*? Angelus. Ex eo quod est, est Spiritus; ex eo quod agit, Angelus.' In these words it is declared, that whatever spiritual beings there may be, who discharge offices in the administration of the world, under God, and are called Angels, they derive

their title altogether from the circumstance of their office. They also declare, that that title has no reference to the nature of the subject, to which it is applied.

In addition to the citations already made from Maimonides, who is certainly the best authority upon this point, I might produce many more, in which he asserts plainly and strongly the opinion, that the word in question does not necessarily imply the existence of separate spirits, but is equally applicable to the natural or the animal powers. But I prefer to establish this point upon the authority of the text of scripture itself.

The first passage to which I would turn, is Acts xii. 23. 'And immediately the Angel of the Lord smote him, [Herod] because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.' The reader will judge whether the last part of this passage does not interpret the first, and whether there is reason to suppose, that Herod was smitten in any other way, or by any other agent than the disease which is specified. I proceed to still stronger instances of the use of language now contended for.

1 Chron. xxi. 14. '*So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.*' This pestilence was sent as a token of God's displeasure to David on account of his numbering the people. In the following verses the same event is described in other words. '*And God sent an Angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it.*' During the process of the destruction David utters this supplication;—'Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered?

Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed ; but as for these sheep, what have they done ? let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me and my father's house ; but not on thy people, *that they should be plagued.*'

2 Samuel, xxiv. 15, 16. The same event is here described in a similar manner. The people are said to be smitten, in one part of the narration, by a pestilence, and in another by an Angel. It will be difficult to avoid the conclusion, that the ideas connected in these passages with *a pestilence*, and with *Angel*, are precisely the same.

Exodus, ix. 23, 24, 25. 'And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground, and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast.' Psalm lxxviii. 43. The signs and wonders, wrought by God, in Egypt, are here celebrated, and the following account is given of the fearful circumstances, recorded in the above quotation from Exodus. 'He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation and trouble, by sending *evil Angels* among them.' There can be but little doubt, what these *evil Angels* were. The He-

brew interpreters agree in considering them as synonymous with the rain, hail, thunder, and fire or lightning.

Psalm cxlviii. 8. 'Fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind *fulfilling his word*,' or acting as his *messengers* or *Angels*. The fourth verse of the one hundred and fourth Psalm, when properly translated, is in itself an express declaration of the meaning which I insist upon; 'Who maketh the winds, his Angels; and the lightnings his messengers.'

Upon the whole, then, I think it clear, that we are sustained by the authority of scripture, in interpreting, as I do, the word Angel. The judicious reader will determine for himself, whether this interpretation does not remove all difficulty from such passages as the following; Dan. vi. 22. 'My God hath sent his Angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me;' and John v. 4. 'For an Angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the waters.'

I conclude the discussion of this point, in the words of Lowman;—'If it should still be said, that it is a current opinion that God is not used to act immediately himself, but by the immediate agency of Angels as his ministers; it must be owned the Jews have such a maxim, "*non enim invenies Deum ullum opus fecisse, nisi per manus alicujus Angeli.*" Yet the true meaning of that maxim, as we have already seen from Maimonides, is to establish that sense of the word Angel, which I have been endeavouring to explain; that is, that it is meant of everything God appoints, and uses to fulfil his will, of the powers and effects of

things inanimate and irrational, as well as of other beings; and to adhere in all cases to the common sense of the word Angel, for a separate spirit, and its proper action, is to mistake the meaning of the Hebrew masters, as well as the language of scripture; for that maxim is so far from establishing the sense intended to be supported by it, that it is founded upon an opinion in direct contradiction to it.'

I conclude, as the result of this investigation, that no strength is given to the opinion, that a separate spirit from God was concerned in the appearances of a miraculous nature, made to the Jews, by the circumstance of their being spoken of as the Angel of the Lord.

3. The third and last argument of any weight, in favor of the opinion, that the divine appearances, under the ancient dispensation, were appearances of another being than Jehovah, is, that they are spoken of as *The Word*. And, it is said, *The Word* is surely a different being from the Supreme God. As this argument takes for granted the main question of our present discussion, which is the true and proper signification of Logos, or *The Word*, we shall not notice it at this time, any further than to observe that it may be found, that the Divine appearances may all be referred to the Logos, without the supposition of the agency of any other being than Jehovah in them.

Having considered the leading arguments which have been advanced in support of one view of the Divine appearances in the ancient church, I will now briefly sketch the convincing and irresistible reasoning

offered in favor of the other view, which regards them as appearances of God himself.

1. This was the opinion of all the old Jewish writers. In speaking of certain laws, Philo expressly declares, that God gave them immediately, without the intervention of any other being whatever. *Των Νομων, ὡς μὲν αὐτος ὁ Θεός, οὐ προσηλασμένος ἄλλῳ, δι' ἑαυτοῦ μόνου θεοπιδόντας ἐξέτισεν.* And he makes these laws to be above all others, because they were thus given by God in his own proper person. *Τὴς μὲν ἐν αὐτοπροσωπῶς θεοπιδόντας δι' ἑαυτοῦ μόνου συνέδωκε καὶ Νομὸς εἶναι, καὶ Νομὸν τῶν ὅτι μὲν κεφαλαιαί.** This same opinion is clearly declared by Josephus. In two places, he says, that *God himself*, *Θεὸς αὐτοῦ*, spake to the Jews from Mount Sinai.† The Son of Sirach, Ecclesiasticus, xxxvi. 1, 5, 13, commences a prayer in these words; 'Have mercy upon us, *O Lord God of all*, and behold us.' Soon after its commencement, he again declares the object of his worship; '*There is no God, but only thou, O God;*' and, in the course of the prayer, he distinctly affirms, that the being whom he addresses, is the same who appears in the Shekinah, 'O be merciful unto Jerusalem, thy holy city, *the place of thy rest.*'

I turn to the canonical scriptures, for evidence upon this point. Exodus xxxiii. 14, 15. 'And he [God] said, *my presence* shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he [Moses] said unto him, if *thy presence* go not with me, carry us not up hence.' In this passage, the word translated *presence*, means *face*.

* Philo de Decalogo, pp. 576, 746.

† Josephus, Antq. l. 3. c. 5, p. 4, 6.

The Chaldean paraphrasts render it *Shekinah*; and the Septuagint translators render this same word, which, in the Hebrew, is the *face* or *presence of God*, and, in the Chaldean paraphrases, *the Shekinah, God himself*; which is a demonstration, that those translators understood the Shekinah as the appearance of none other than Jehovah. This is the express declaration, too, of John, in his book of Revelation, xxi. 3. 'And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and *God himself* shall be with them, and be their God.' In this passage, the words translated 'tabernacle' and 'will dwell,' *σκηνή* and *κατασκήνωσι*, have the same meaning as the Shekinah.

An attentive perusal of the whole chapter of Exodus just referred to, will show, to the entire satisfaction of every mind, that it was God himself, and not any inferior being, or other being, who acted in the Divine appearances usually made to the Jews. In consequence of the obstinate propensity of the people to idolatry, God is represented to have threatened, through Moses, that he would not go up in the midst of them any more, but would send an Angel or deputy to accompany them. Upon hearing this, the people were grieved, and returned to the worship of the true God, and Moses offered their supplications for pardon and the return of God's presence among them. God heard their prayers, and granted their petition, and restored their confidence, by promising not to put into execution his threat of sending a subordinate being before

them, but *to continue to favor them with his own presence*. It is not perceived in what manner the inferences from this narration can be avoided.

But one other instance will be cited. Genesis ix. 17. 'And God said unto Noah, this is the token of the covenant which I have established between *me* and all flesh that is upon the earth.' This sentence is thus rendered in the version of Onkelos; 'This is the sign of the covenant, which I have established between my *Mimra* [a word always applied to the Shekinah or Divine appearances] and all flesh.' 'Upon the whole, it should seem, that the ancient interpreters, who were best acquainted with the Hebrew expression, and the doctrines of the Jewish church, understood the Divine appearances made to the Jews, to be appearances of God himself, not of some other being in his name, and as his representative. This interpretation is also most agreeable to the passages of scripture themselves, and to the explications which the sacred writers have given of them.'

2. The character, and titles of the Supreme God are appropriated to the person, who is concerned in these appearances, in such a manner as no form of speech, or principles of interpretation can allow to one who merely represents, or personates him. For instance, Moses, in speaking of this person, says, Exodus viii. 10, 'There is none like unto the Lord our God.' Isaiah says, vi. 5, 'Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts;' and Nehemiah uses this strong language, ix. 6, 'Thou, even thou art Lord alone; the host of heaven worshippeth thee.'

3. 'The whole worship of the church is uniformly, throughout the Old Testament, properly, and immediately directed to the person appearing, or acting in these appearances, without any intimation of a representative. So that if the person appearing in the Shekinah be a representative only, he is not only a representative speaking in the name of another, and with his authority, but he must also be a representative to receive all religious worship for him too; for to him was all the worship of the church to be directed, as the immediate object of it. The whole form of expression concerning the worship of the church, under the Mosaical institution, is founded on this as a principle, that it is directed to Jehovah, who dwelt in the most holy place of the temple between the cherubim. All prayer is offered to this being, and it cannot be supposed that in a true revelation any other being than the only God could be proposed as the object of prayer.

4. Finally, 'it was the first and fundamental article of the faith of the Jewish Church that there is only one true God. And it was the first command that they should have no other gods before him or beside him. They were to worship him and him only. If therefore we consider another spirit or an Angel to be the only person appearing, the whole worship of the church will then be given to that person or spirit directly and immediately, and not to the one God of Israel, the Lord of Hosts, and the Most High. And in this sense, as I apprehend, the whole religious service of the church must have been an express contradiction

to the chief and principal doctrine of the Jewish religion, and indeed of all true religion, natural as well as revealed.'

'The worshippers of God, under the Jewish dispensation, seem very sensible of this truth, and often express how highly they were concerned never to depart from it, or to worship any other than the one true God, on any pretence whatever. And yet throughout the whole of this dispensation, all their prayers, and their whole worship, were addressed to the Shekinah, or to the person who appeared in it, though they never once give the least intimation, on any occasion, that the person appearing was properly an Angel, and not the Most High. So that if the person appearing in the Shekinah was indeed only an Angel, or any other being than the Supreme God himself, it would seem that the whole worship of the church, for two thousand years together, was offered to an object, besides, and against the intention of every worshipper, against the chief fundamental doctrines and rule of worship in their revelation, and against the chief principles of all religion, and religious worship, according to the light of nature.'

We have thus followed, step by step, the sure and irresistible reasoning of the learned and judicious Lowman, until we have arrived at his conclusion, that it was the Great Jehovah, the one true God who appeared to the Jews in the Shekinah, or who was concerned in those miraculous communications, which were made to them.

The process by which the investigation, which is now closed, has been conducted, has been necessarily dry, and tedious; but it was impossible, from its very nature, to make it otherwise. And it could not, without injury to the general discussion, have been rendered more brief. It is true, that the ground of argument, in favor of the trinity, or rather of the supreme deity of Jesus Christ, which I think, has now been removed, has not been much occupied of late years. And it would not now have been traversed again, had it not been of essential importance to the prosecution of our present inquiry, to settle, in the first place, the question, which has been so often, and with so much learned toil, agitated within its borders.

Having determined the spiritual Being, who spoke and acted in the Shekinah, to have been Jehovah himself, or the one true God, let us now see in what light the appearances, so called, present themselves to us.

No one can suppose that Jehovah, in his actual person, ever appeared to the senses of men. He is a spirit, and therefore must be imperceptible to our bodily organs. He is everywhere present, and therefore cannot be perceived in any particular place. Whatever, therefore, might have been seen, or heard, at any one time, or on any circumscribed spot, was not God, in any sense whatever. Indeed, when we come to reflect closely upon the subject, we must instantly be convinced, that God could not be, actually and in his essence, present in one part of space, more than in all other parts. In no sense then whatever, can we con-

sider God to have been in the Shekinah, more than in every other point of the universe, which he fills. All that was seen, was material objects. All that was heard, addressed itself to the mind, like other sounds, through the mediation of the air, and the auditory nerve.

The amount of the meaning expressed by Shekinah, considered in the light, in which it is now presented to us, is this ;—the omnipresent, invisible Jehovah, called into existence a certain striking and extraordinary sensible appearance, for the purpose either of arresting the attention of men, or of manifesting his power, or of communicating his will. So far, therefore, from being God himself, the Shekinah was merely an instrument in his hand, a mean by which he promoted certain ends, such as awakening attention, producing impression, or conveying knowledge. It was an Angel, in the sense which has been given to that word, and was so called throughout, as we shall see, in one version of the scriptures.

Whenever God caused any miraculous appearance, so as to direct the attention of men towards him, or to convey to them communications, then and there was a Shekinah. When therefore we think of a Shekinah, we are not to suppose that God is contained within it, in any sense in which we do not, at the same time, suppose him to be contained in every other object in the universe, and in every other portion of space ; but we are to regard it only as the chosen point, towards which we are to look, in order to recognise his being, and contemplate with reverence his character ; as the

selected channel, through which, we are to direct to him our worship, and receive from him instructions.

This, I think, can be proved to have been the view which the Jews entertained of those appearances called Shekinah. Maimonides meant this, when he called it '*Gloria creata*.' Deut. iv. 36, seems to offer the same explanation; 'Out of Heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee; and upon earth he showed thee his great fire, and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.' The Shekinah is in this passage defined to be a material element, conveying God's words to men. An examination of all that was said at the dedication of the temple by Solomon, will lead to a confirmation of this opinion of the Shekinah.

But we shall be able to understand more fully the nature of the Shekinah, or of the Divine appearances in the Jewish church, by examining the several appellations given to them.

1. They were called, as we have before remarked, 'the Angel of the Lord.' Exodus iii. 2. 'And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.' Verse 4, this same appearance is called 'God'; verse 6, the being appearing declares himself, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'; and in verse 14, he says, in answer to the inquiry of Moses, 'I am that I am.' It is remarkable that Stephen, in his account of this occurrence, uses similar language. Acts vii. 30, 'There appeared unto him in the wilderness an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.' In the re-

mainder of Stephen's narration he calls it the 'voice of the Lord,' and speaks of it as an appearance of the one true God.

In the Book of Judges vi., the application of the word Angel to the appearances of God himself, is clear and obvious ; 22d verse, 'And when Gideon perceived that he was an Angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God, for because I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die.' In this place the second part of the first clause interprets the first part, and proves, that the 'Lord God' and the 'Angel of the Lord' are applied to the same appearances. But besides this, there is other evidence in this passage, that 'the Angel of the Lord' was considered as the appearance of God himself. Gideon was impressed with terror, lest he should die, because he had seen an Angel of the Lord. Now it was the seeing God, which was supposed to be followed with death. Judges xiii. 22. 'And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.' Isaiah vi. 5, the prophet exclaims, 'Woe is me ! for I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.' Deut. v. 25. 'If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the Living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?' These instances prove that it is seeing the appearances, or hearing the voice of God himself, which was supposed, by the Jews, to be accompanied, or followed, by death. Gideon there-

fore must have meant, by the 'Angel of the Lord,' an appearance of Jehovah, a true and proper Shekinah.

Paul, says, Galatians iii. 19, that the law was ordained or given from Mount Sinai by Angels. An examination of the part of scripture, describing the giving of the law, will satisfy any one, that it was the Supreme God, who acted on that sublime and awful occasion. The passages, now quoted, contain within themselves full evidence, that, although 'the Angel of the Lord' is spoken of, the Divine being referred to in them, is God alone; of course the phrase *Angel* must be limited in its meaning to the sense which we have before seen to have been its original and proper sense. The 'Angel of the Lord' must therefore, in these instances, mean that which God makes his agent, or instrument, in a peculiar and extraordinary sense, to exhibit his character or convey his will. But this expression is equivalent to the Shekinah, and in the Arabic version, is used almost invariably instead of the Shekinah. From this appellation given to it, then, we learn that the Shekinah discharged, in a preeminent degree, the office, as God's Angel, or agent, or instrument, of exhibiting his character, and conveying his will to men.

2. Another name for the Shekinah was 'presence,' or 'the Angel of the presence.' We have already seen, Exodus xxxiii. 14, 15, an instance of the use of this expression. The amount of its signification probably is this. The Divine appearances, made to the Jews, were a sensible demonstration, vouchsafed to them, of the general truth of the *presence of God*.

These forms of expression seem to exclude the idea of the intervention of any other being than God, in the Shekinah, by declaring, that it was *his* presence, which was indicated by it. The only addition, then, made by this title to the interpretation, or definition of the Divine appearances, the nature of which we are investigating, is this; it is God, who acts by, and through them, and they are tokens of his presence with us, and of his interest in our welfare and progress.

3. The 'glory of God' is another appellation given to the Shekinah. Exodus xxiv. 16, 17. 'And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire, on the top of the mount;' and, also, xl. 35. 'And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.' The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses the same expression, in describing the temple ordinances; ix. 5. 'And over it the cherubims of *glory* shadowing the mercy seat.' And Peter, who was present at the transfiguration, described Luke ix. 28, speaks, in his 2d Epistle i. 17, 18, of the appearance of God upon that occasion, using the same phrase; 'For he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice from the *excellent glory*, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.' The import of this expression can be easily perceived. As applied to the Shekinah, it signified the impressive and awe striking circumstances which accompanied it, and caused men to be filled with admiration and reverence towards him

who appeared in it. Maimonides thus interprets it; '*Per gloriam Domini significatur nonnunquam splendor aliquis creatus, quem Deus, quasi prodigii, vel miraculi loco, ad magnificentiam suam ostendendam, alicubi habitare fecit.*' * This title evidently meets the interpretation which we have given, in general terms, of the Shekinah, as a striking exhibition, suited to produce reverence, and admiration, and faith. It is unfavorable to the opinion, that there is any distinct personal character connected with it, and instructs us, that, in addition to its being the instrument of God's will, and the token of his presence, the Shekinah is an image or representation, to some extent, of his glory and majesty.

4. The next title given to the appearances of God, in the ancient church, is 'his name.' It is more particularly applied to the Shekinah, as it existed in the temple. An instance of its use has been given in the prayer of Solomon, already quoted, 2 Chron. vi. 20, 21. It is also used in the prayer of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 5. 'And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein, for *thy name*, saying, If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand

* More Nevochim, Part I. c. 64. p. 115.

before this house, and in thy presence (for *thy name* is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.' In this prayer, the being addressed, and whose appearance, or Shekinah, is supposed to dwell in the temple, is manifestly distinguished from that appearance which is spoken of, not as his representative nor as a distinct being at all, but simply as 'his name.' This title also seems to exclude the idea of a peculiar spiritual presence, and to set forth, that, as the name of a man is inscribed for the purpose of recalling to the recollection of those who read it, the idea of that man, so, in the Shekinah, God inscribed his name before the eyes of men, in order to keep them attentive to his existence, his communications, and his will. From this appellation, then, we gather that the Shekinah was a remembrancer, a token, and a signature of God to men.

5. The last title given to the appearances of a Divine nature, in the Hebrew church, was the 'Mimra de Adonai' of the Chaldean paraphrases, which, as the Greek language prevailed, and acquired a fixed predominance, was translated 'The Logos, or Word of the Lord.' As an extensive use of the Greek language continued up to, and beyond the time of our Saviour, this phrase also continued, and, as it expressed the Shekinah with greater accuracy than any other, so it was the last appellation which was given to it. It was so long, and so generally used by the Hebrews, that it was borrowed and transplanted into the vocabulary of other nations. We have already, in another part of this discussion, traced its progress from the

Shekinah of the temple to a distinguished station in the Philosophy of Plato, and in the Theology of the East. As it was used in the ancient scriptures, and in their paraphrases, to express the source from which the Jews had received their law and their religion,* so we find, that a similar title of office is applied to Eastern kings and rulers, viewed as the sources of authority and law to their people. *Emir* or *Imer* or *Amer*, and *Muphti*, seem to have originated from the Jewish title which we are now considering. And so does the Roman word of office Dictator. The counsellors of Nebuchadnezzar are called *Words*, in the original Hebrew, Dan. iii. 2, 3, 24, 27. Those Doctors, who gave out expositions and instructions concerning the *Mishna*, were called 'Amoraim,' which is very similar in its import to the *Word*, as a title of the Shekinah, and is equivalent to the etymological meaning of Dictator.†

The adoption of this expression into so many of the languages and speculations of antiquity, and the wide field which it has occupied in the controversies and discussions of christian Theology, render it highly important, that we should ascertain, if possible, its meaning. The process which I propose to pursue for this purpose, is extremely simple and obvious. It is an examination of its common, popular meaning. The Shekinah, as we have seen, can be defined, in general

* Lowman's Tracts, p. 228, seqq. The same on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, p. 195; and the same on Revelations, p. 234 note; Rational of the Hebrew Ritual, Part II. ch. ii. pp. 67, 255, 372.

† Prideaux's Connexion, Book V. Year 446.

terms, to mean, *the sensible circumstances which accompanied the conveyance of God's will to men*; or, in other words, *whenever and wherever God addressed his creatures through the instrumentality of sensible objects, then and there was a Shekinah*. But the phrase, 'The Word of the Lord,' or, by way of eminence, 'The Word,' was applied to the Shekinah. The question is, what light is thrown upon it by the application of that title? or, what is the meaning of that title?

- When we analyze the meaning of 'word,' as it is now used in common speech, we shall find, that it suits exactly to the nature of the Shekinah, as a means of communication between God and the human race. There are three different significations universally known to be attached to *word*. 1. The first is the meaning or sense conveyed, the idea expressed by it. For instance, when a man says, 'I like your words,' 'Your words are agreeable or satisfactory to me,' or 'Your words are wise and convincing;' it is meant, that the thoughts, which the words convey, are agreeable, wise, or convincing. This signification is the most common, and the highest signification of *word*.
- It constitutes in fact its essence. 2. The second is this; the visible characters, or the audible sounds, which serve as the vehicles of the sense, or ideas communicated. We say, for instance, 'a long word,' 'a short word,' or 'an harmonious word,' meaning word, as a sensible object only. 3. The third meaning of word, is formed by a combination of the two others. We should say for instance, that, in a certain line of poetry,

a particular word, is 'an excellent word,' when we mean, that it conveys the right thought, and, at the same time, is melodious, and well adapted to the metre, or the rhyme. These three are certainly common and popular significations of *word*, as we now use it, in writing, or in speech.

Now let us apply these significations to 'The Word,' as the title, or description of the Shekinah. If they answer the purposes of interpretation, and explanation, there will be no occasion to go any further, but we may rest in the simple and natural view, which will thus be presented to us. The first fully meets all those cases, in which the instructions and communications, received from God through the Shekinah, are spoken of as 'The Word,' or in which, his will, or attributes, a knowledge of which has been thus conveyed, are called 'The Word.' The second explains those instances, in which the agent, or instrument used in the communication of any truth or precept, is called 'The Word;' and the third answers the exigency of those passages, in which both the means and the matter of the communication are comprehended in one view. The amount of what I say, is, that the Jews, without going beyond the obvious and simple meaning of the phrase, might have said 'The Word of the Lord,' either when referring to the will or law of God, or to the instruments and vehicles which conveyed and made them known, or to that will and the bearers of it, united in one compound idea.

Words, by addressing the eye as written, or the ear as spoken, convey the thoughts and feelings of one

human being to another. In the same manner, the appearances of the Shekinah, by addressing the senses communicated the designs and the will of God to men. They answered the same purpose and discharged the same office. How natural, therefore, and how proper was it, to call the Shekinah 'The Word of the Lord!'

There is, indeed, nothing more common than such a use of language. We speak of the instructions respecting the will and character of God, which we receive from the ordinary appearances and operations of the material and outward universe, in a similar phrase, *the voice of Nature*. To the faith of the saint, and the fancy of the poet, the whole creation, with all its processes and relations, is ever represented in the same view as The Logos or Word of the Lord. 'The Heavens,' says the Psalmist, '*declare the glory of God. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*' Thunder was called the *voice of God* by the ancient Hebrews, the original word, Exodus ix. 28., translated 'thunderings,' means, literally, '*voices of God.*' And to this day, in the language of devotional poetry, the objects of the outward creation are always spoken of, as audible in the praises and teachings of God. Such they were to the ear of Milton throughout his unrivalled morning hymn,—

————— 'yet these *declare*
'Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.'

Before the mind of Thompson, the material universe appeared in the same light,—

‘These as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring,
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.
The thunder rolls: be hushed the prostrate world:
While cloud to cloud returns the *solemn hymn*.
Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks,
Retain the sound: the broad *responsive low*,
Ye vallies, raise——’

The beautiful verses of Addison, in his translation, or paraphrase of the words of the Psalmist, just referred to, set forth the same idea, and are an instance of the same use of language,—

‘The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original *proclaim*.
The unwearied sun, from day to day
Doth his Creator’s power display;
And *publishes* to every land,
The work of an almighty hand.

‘Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon *takes up the wondrous tale*,
And nightly to the *listening earth*
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars which round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

‘What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found;

*In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing, as they shine,
The hand, that made us, is divine.*

There is no limit to quotations illustrative of this use of language and form of thought. Now if the ordinary manifestations of God in his works are thus found naturally to suggest this kind of expression, we can have no difficulty in explaining its application to extraordinary manifestations, to the audible and visible appearances of the Deity in the Shekinah. As it was thus natural and proper, at the time, to adopt this phrase, so it is at this time, and so will it ever be. It is much to be regretted, that its simple and obvious meaning should have been obscured, or its literal translation neglected and avoided.

Although the expression, 'The Word of the Lord,' strictly speaking, conveys only the three meanings just mentioned, yet, as the highest, most common, and most lasting title of the Shekinah, it is capable of embracing the whole, or any part, of the ideas associated with the Shekinah. I have endeavoured to collect those ideas from the various appellations, given to these Divine appearances, and I will now repeat them, in order that we may have before us, in one view, the materials, which go to make up the import of 'The Word,' or 'The Word of the Lord,' as we find it used in the ancient scriptures, in writings of the apostolic age, and in the Chaldean paraphrases.

1. The highest and most comprehensive import of a Shekinah is that which it communicates—the will, the purposes, the laws of God; that is, religion as a

body of truths and precepts, of motives and obligations. This meaning is contained in the first signification, which we have seen to be attached to 'Logos' or 'Word.'

2. The second characteristic of the Shekinah is that in which it presents itself as an image of God, as a representation of his character. This appears to have been the occasion of giving to it the appellation of the 'Glory of God.'

3. The third view, in which it was regarded was, as the appointed medium or bearer of God's will, and as the instrument, selected for his special and peculiar use. This meaning is expressed by the second signification of Logos or Word and by the title of 'Angel of the Lord.'

4. The fourth aspect of a Shekinah was that in which it is regarded as a standing and particular proof of the existence and the presence of God, and of his connexion with us, and interest in us. This was the import of the appellation—'presence,' 'Angel of the presence,' 'name,' &c.

5. Lastly, the Shekinah might frequently be contemplated and spoken of, in a general manner, as embracing any, or all these significations, and there are, without doubt, frequent instances in which it is used in this broad and indeterminate sense.

We have already seen, that 'The Logos,' or 'Word,' was the general, and final title, affixed to these Divine appearances, or to the Shekinah. Of course it is capable of receiving any or all these meanings, and must be understood to include them, more or less, accord-

ing to the circumstances of the cases respectively in which it is used.

But Jesus Christ is called, by John, and other scripture writers, 'Logos' or 'Word.' So far as this title is appropriated to him, we are now able to explain it, without any difficulty, by referring to its several significations, as just stated. There is reason to believe, however, that he was 'The Word,' in a peculiar and preeminent sense. There seems to be evidence, that every former 'Word,' all previous Divine communications and appearances, were prospective, preparative, and subsidiary to him, as 'The Word.' Paul says, 1 Cor. x. 4, 'For they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ,' or, as Locke happily expresses it, 'They, the Israelites, drank all the same spiritual, typical drink, which came out of the Rock, and followed them; which Rock signifieth Christ.' Col. ii. 17. Paul uses these words;—'Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.' And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the Jewish dispensation, says, x. 1, 'That the Law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.'

In order to throw light on these texts, and to obtain clear ideas, respecting the manner, in which every previous Shekinah, or 'Word,' was prospective and subsidiary to Jesus Christ, regarded as a Shekinah, or as 'The Word,' it will be necessary for us to take a comprehensive view of the whole subject of religion,

or of intercourse and connexion between God and his human creatures.

God is a spirit, invisible and incomprehensible. His presence is spread throughout the universe. All that we can discern of him is his works, and they are equally numerous, and equally impressive, on every side. We are incapable, at least while our minds are shut up, as it were, in these bodies, with no other avenues of thought leading to them, than those which the senses open, to receive any adequate idea of his nature. In a previous Letter, I have considered the extent to which we can go, in forming a conception of God, and have shown, that we can hardly advance beyond mere negations, the removal of those restrictions and limitations, by which we are confined.

But the foundation of religion can only be laid in a knowledge of God. It was the divine purpose to establish religion among men. Something, therefore, was required to be done. Some expedient was to be used, in conveying to men such a knowledge of God, as would serve for a foundation of religion. It may be said, perhaps, that the inward light of reason, or the outward light of nature, would be sufficient to guide men to this knowledge. But natural reason exists with different clearness, and strength, in different individuals, and it is, in every mind, liable to be obscured, bewildered, and led astray. It would not be safe, therefore, to trust to that to enlighten men, and to keep them enlightened, with regard to God and his attributes. Neither would it answer the purpose to

leave the mind to depend for a knowledge of God, upon the observance of his works, for many reasons.

The works of God surround us. We see them in every direction. Now we cannot, in our present state, keep our thoughts fixed steadily, or clearly, unless we have before them a definite and distinct object, unless some particular direction has been marked out, which they prevailingly assume, and in which they can go forth, with the facility and force, which habit alone can give. Again, he who knows God only in his works, sees him, at one time in one object, at another time in another object, and he will contemplate his presence and character, on each several occasion, under such different circumstances, and in connexion with such various associations, that his conceptions of him will be liable to inconsistency and confusion.

If men had been left to learn the character of the Creator from his works alone, they would have been perplexed and confounded, as we have seen them to have been, when without, and even when in possession of revelation, by the existence of evil in the outward world. They would have been exposed, too, to the error of regarding God as peculiarly, and even exclusively present, in those external objects, changes, and powers, which might make the deepest impressions upon their feelings or imaginations. The whole system of ancient polytheism and idolatry probably grew out of an error like this.

There are many other considerations, of a similar kind, which will suggest themselves to a reflecting mind, in favor of the opinion, that however much the

works of nature may do to illustrate, they would not have been adequate to the office of acquainting men, or of keeping them acquainted with the character and attributes of God. We conclude, therefore, that the powers of the mind within, and the appearances of creation without, were not sufficient to establish and confirm relations of religion between man and his Maker. And it became necessary to convey to the human race, by particular revelation, those truths upon which religion might rest as a foundation.

There are two ways in which the Divine might communicate with the human mind. The one is direct, the other indirect. It would have been possible to impart those truths directly to our intellects. But there are three strong and insurmountable objections to this mode. 1. It might, perhaps, to a mind not given to reflection, and inward examination, often be difficult to distinguish such suggestions of the Divine spirit, from its own fancies, dreams, and reveries. 2. It would be impossible to propose to others, or to perpetuate any satisfactory proof that what an individual professes to communicate, as truth supernaturally revealed to him, is really such, and not delusion produced in his mind by natural causes, or deception fabricated for the purposes of imposture. 3. And this impracticability of affording to each other the evidence of their several inspirations of Divine knowledge, would render it absolutely necessary that a separate revelation should be made to every individual, throughout all generations, which would leave no room for the exercise of the natural faculties, in the investigation of its evi-

dence, and annihilate all social and common interest in religion whatever, it being, under these circumstances, not only a personal, but a private concern, with which we should be connected, not by one general bond of union, but severally by a distinct and separate tie.

It appears, therefore, that a revelation, the truth of which can be ascertained and vindicated, must be made indirectly, by the agency, the instrumentality, the mediation of objects, separate both from the Divine and human mind, addressing themselves to the senses, capable of that kind of evidence, the force of which all can comprehend, and which can easily be preserved and perpetuated, the evidence of the senses, and performing the office of bearing the will, purposes, and knowledge of God from him to his human creatures. This is the theory of revealed religion.

In establishing religion, it must have been the intention of the Deity to make known all those moral and spiritual truths concerning him, his attributes, and his will, which it would be well for man to know. But, in the infancy of the human mind, it would not be capable of understanding, appreciating, and transmitting a full revelation of these truths. It would be necessary, therefore, to open and enlarge the revelation of them, according as men should gradually become able to bear them ; to apportion the quantity of truth conveyed to the existing capacity to receive it, and to present it entire before them when there should be found to be intellectual cultivation enough in the world to secure to it a firm footing and a full reception.

This is the theory of the several dispensations of revealed religion. And, in this sense, were all the previous communications, or words of God to men, preparations, forerunners, and types of that final and complete revelation, conveyed, in the fulness of the times, by Jesus Christ, considered as the originally appointed and preeminent medium or bearer of the word or revelation of God to man. This prospective appointment of Jesus Christ, considered as existing only in futurity, to be the final and perpetual *Word* of God, is thus declared at the institution of the Mosaic dispensation, Deut. xviii. 18. 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, [that, is Moses] and will put *my words* in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.'

In the early and ruder ages of the world, when the chief development of the character of man had taken place in his physical nature, by the exercise of the faculties of sense, and the powers of the intellect had scarcely been awakened into action, the *Word of God* to men, that is, the communications made by him to them, was of a corresponding and appropriate character. It was uttered or conveyed under circumstances, and by the instrumentality of striking and impressive sensible appearances, suited to awaken terror and admiration, and to impress upon the mind a perception of those of the divine attributes, which it would be most able to appreciate and comprehend, such as power, majesty, and glory. It enjoined the establishment and observance of outward ceremonial services. It

proposed, as motives to the practice of virtue, and the avoidance of vice, temporal rewards and retributions. And it did not disclose the truth of a future existence with much distinctness, because, at that time, men would have been unable to form accurate conceptions of the condition of that existence, of the spiritual joys, which await the pure in heart, or of the spiritual woes, which result to the hardened and depraved.

As mankind, or rather, that portion of them embraced by the Jewish nation, advanced in the development of the mind, larger and more generous views were unfolded to them, of the character of God, and of the principles of duty. I think that we can trace a gradual improvement and approach towards the entire truth, not so much, however, in the quantity of the truth revealed, as in right views of that truth, as we follow up the succession of the Hebrew scriptures, from the earliest historical, to the latest prophetic writings. Before the termination of the line of prophets, we have evidence, that the mind had outgrown the sacrifices, and offerings, and ceremonies of the Jewish ritual. Micah vi. 6. 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do

justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?’

When the volume of prophecy was closed up, the course of preparation for the great and final revelation was finished. There ceased to be a *Word of God to men*. No communications were received from him. There was an interruption in the chain of dispensations, a long and solemn pause, until all the circumstances of the world conspired in proclaiming *the fulness of the times*. And then the *Word of God to men* was restored. Then did God speak to men. His *Word* came forth to them with a full and final revelation, that for which all the others had been sent to prepare the way, of his character and attributes, of his pleasure and purpose, and of the duty and destination of man. Jesus Christ was chosen to be that ‘Word.’ ‘He who at sundry times and in divers manners *spake* in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, *spoken* unto us by his Son.’* Jesus of Nazareth was raised up and

* It is worthy of remark, that the title, ‘Word,’ is thus explained, in its application to our Saviour, by the celebrated Servetus, the learned Unitarian, whom Calvin, in his envy and wrath, styled ‘the proudest knave whiche Spayne ever brought forth.’ The following are his words; ‘Ea omnia, quæ antea Deus verbo suo, seu propria voce operabatur, caro Christus nunc operatur, cui traditum est regnum et omnis potestas. Responsa, quæ ab oraculo illo accipiebat Moses, nunc ab ore Christi sumuntur. Ponam verba mea in ore ejus, et in nomine meo loquetur. Deut. xviii. “A me ipso,” inquit, “non loquor, sed sicut docuit me Pater, ita loquor.” *Sermo Patris ipse dicitur, quia Patris mentem enunciat, et ejus cognitionem facit.*’ De Trinitate, lib. ii. p. 49. This passage is extracted from the book which procured Servetus the honors of martyrdom at the hands of

appointed to discharge between God and man, in a preeminent manner, and perpetually, the same office, which *words* discharge between man and man. He was to be the bearer of his law; a copy, likeness, image of his attributes, and the revealer of his character. By *the fulness of the times*, must be understood, the accomplishment of the preparation of circumstances. These circumstances have been pointed out, in a previous part of the inquiry, in the natural overthrow of every separate system of superstition, in the comprehension of the whole known world within the limits of one empire, in which the toleration of all amounted to the rejection in effect of all, by opening the door for doubt respecting each single religion, and in the prevalence of abstract reasoning and moral speculation throughout all classes in society.

In order to prevent misapprehension and obscurity, I will, in a few words, explain what I mean, when I say that Jesus was 'The Word of God,' using the phrase in the same manner, in which we have found it to have been applied to the Shekinah, for ages before his coming, in the Jewish church and scriptures. At the very outset I would remark, that the idea of God himself being visibly, or personally, or peculiarly present, that is, present in such a manner, as to imply, that he was not equally, at the time, present in every

the great Protestant Reformer of Geneva! It is entitled *Christianismi Restitutio*, and, besides being a most powerful defence of Unitarianism, discloses the illustrious physician and divine to the world, as the discoverer or first assertor of the *circulation of the blood*! See Cambridge General Repository, Vol. IV. p. 60.

other object and every other place, is obviously excluded, as we have seen, by the whole tenor of Jewish phraseology, as applied to the Shekinah, and in a formal, precise, and definite manner by Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the Temple. The Jews did not regard the Shekinah, as God, in any proper sense. It was not God, in any proper sense. The application of the title of the Shekinah, 'The Word of the Lord,' to Jesus Christ, so far, therefore, from authorising an inference that he was God, absolutely excludes and prevents such an inference.

1. I go on to say, that the doctrines and precepts, the Divine declarations and promises which Christ conveyed, that is, his gospel, considered as a system of moral truth and duty, is called 'The Word of the Lord,' precisely as the law of God is called his 'Word,' in the Old Testament, in the one hundred and nineteenth psalm, for instance, and as we speak of *word* when we mean the sense conveyed by it. This is the first meaning of the Shekinah, as we have seen, p. 121.

2. Jesus Christ is called 'The Word of the Lord,' in as much as he exhibited, in his character, example, and principles, a representation of God's moral attributes. Regarded in this view, he is more worthy of being called, the 'brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,' and 'the image of the invisible God,' than any previous 'Word' or 'Logos' of God, which had principally been confined to exhibitions of his natural attributes, as they are called,

shadowed forth in appearances of material grandeur. This is the second meaning of the Shekinah.

3. The person of Jesus, as an object of sight, and his language, as an object of hearing, were 'The Word of the Lord,' in the same manner in which the pillar of fire, or the cloud, or the burning bush, was 'The Word of God,' and in which the visible signs or audible sounds of language, are words of men. They were the constituted vehicles of the thoughts and purposes of God to us. In this sense, John speaks of 'The Word' in the first verses of his first Epistle. This I placed as the third meaning of the Shekinah.

4. Jesus Christ might be spoken of as 'The Word of the Lord,' according to the fourth meaning which I considered to be attached to the Shekinah, and in virtue of which it was denominated the 'presence of God,' or the 'Angel of his presence,' or 'his name;' that is, it may sometimes signify that in him, God gives to us an assurance of his presence, his intimate relation with us, and his interest in our condition, and that Christ and his gospel are a perpetual manifestation and pledge of his regard, and of his readiness to hear and answer our petitions.

5. 'The Word of the Lord' might be applied to Christ, as it was to the Shekinah, in any or all these significations, including any definite, or indefinite combination of them. The intelligent and careful interpreter will, in every instance of its use, be able to determine, with sufficient accuracy, the nature and the extent of its signification.

It should be mentioned, in conclusion, that Christ was *officially* 'The Word of God,' in whatever sense the phrase may be applied to him. As 'The Word,' he bore an office which had been in existence, and almost in constant operation, ever since the world began. The same function was discharged by him as flesh, that is, as a man, which had been discharged by the cloud and light, which rested over the mercy seat of the Temple, and by every previous Shekinah. This is well expressed by Augustin, as quoted by Lowman. '*In ipso inhabitat plenitudo Divinitatis corporaliter, quia in Templo habitaverat umbraliter.*'

We must often explain our Lord's language, when speaking of himself, and the language of the scripture writers, when speaking of him, by considering it as referring to this his official character. He had pre-existed in his office, not merely because that office had existed, and been exercised, before he came into the world, but he could be spoken of, as preexistent, in view of his office, with peculiar fitness and propriety; for, in every exercise of that office, in former times, he had been foreshown, typified, and included, as it were. Every previous 'Word,' or communication of God's will to men, had looked towards, and been preparative and subsidiary to the final and complete declaration, made by Christ, as preeminently and permanently 'The Word,' or medium of intercourse between God and his human creatures. How far the view here given of the office of Christ will go towards explaining and illustrating those texts, which, at first sight, seem to set forth the doctrine of the pre-

existence of his soul, is left to the calm consideration, and dispassionate judgment of all who may take an interest in this important subject.

When we interpret in this manner, the title of 'Word' as applied to our Lord, we can ascertain the true glory and dignity of his character. There is no difficulty whatever in doing this. Christians should regard Jesus with sentiments, similar in kind, although higher in degree than those with which devout and well instructed Jews regarded 'The Word of the Lord' when it came to them.

The Jews did not *worship* the 'cloud by day,' nor the 'pillar of fire by night,' nor the awful and sublime appearances on Mount Sinai, nor the ever present light and cloud in the holy of holies. These were never the objects of their prayers or their ritual. And whoever worships Jesus, because he is the 'Logos' or 'Word of the Lord,' is guilty of precisely the same kind of idolatry, as the Jew would have been, who should have directed his worship primarily and ultimately to the sensible appearances which constituted the Shekinah, and not onwards, through them, as it were, to Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. The application, therefore, of the title of 'Word' to Jesus Christ, proves, upon the authority of the Old Testament, that, so far from being, as the Trinitarians represent him, the Supreme God and an object of worship, as such, he is merely an instrument in the hands of God, and that it is idolatry to view him as God, or to make him an object of ultimate worship.

As the Jews regarded the thunders, and lightnings, and smoke on Mount Sinai with reverence, because, through them, God addressed their attention, and 'talked with them;' so we should regard Jesus Christ with reverence, for he is the chosen, the beloved, the perpetual, and preeminently exalted mediator, or interpreter, through whom God has vouchsafed to commune with men. When we look upon our Lord, in this light, all those passages of scripture which ascribe greatness and honor to him, so far from being considered exaggerations, do not seem adequate to the conceptions which we cannot but form of his glory and dignity. From the whole human race, he has been selected, to be the herald, the ambassador of God to men, and the bearer to God of the worship of men.

It is important to remark, that the Jews regarded the Shekinah with reverence, not only because it was the appointed centre of communication from God to them, but, also, because through it were all communications to ascend from them to God. When they were about to address God, either in meditation or in prayer, they were directed to turn towards his 'Word' or Shekinah, and to fix their eyes upon it. For it presented to them a lively exhibition of his majesty and power, his glory and presence, and, while thus worshipping, their thoughts would be drawn off from every forbidden idol, and they would have correct conceptions of the true God, in those aspects of his character, in which he was then and there revealed to them. They were confident, that when they offered

their worship in this manner, they would be heard and accepted, because it was their belief, that 'God's eye would be open upon the place, day and night, whereof he had said that he would put *his name* there, to hearken to the prayer which his servant prayed towards that place,' and that when prayers ascended, through this appointed channel, 'God would hear from his dwellingplace, even from heaven, and when he heard, forgive.'

So will it forever be the duty of Christians, when they pray to the Father, to offer their petitions through Christ. For Christ, in his instructions, uttered the will, and in his virtues, presents us with a pattern, an image of the moral glory and sublime perfection of the Father's character. By fixing our eyes upon Jesus, that is, upon his example and principles, when we worship the Father, we shall have before us an accurate representation of his character, and shall worship him *in truth*; that is, with a correct perception of his moral attributes. When the thoughts and feelings have been regulated and adjusted by the contemplation of such a model of himself, the devout affections will rise, an acceptable offering, to God.

As the Jews all turned, in prayer, towards their Shekinah, which conveyed the knowledge, and showed forth the attributes of God, so far as he was pleased to reveal himself to them, so all Christians, when they pray, should turn, in inward vision, towards their Master, and through him who was appointed to reveal by his teaching, and to exhibit in his example and char-

acter, the moral principles and purposes of God, with respect to men, direct their thoughts, and offer their worship to the Father. It is by contemplating the example of Christ, and obeying his precepts, and cultivating his spirit, by erecting his religion within us, and, in this way only, that we can hold communion in a spirit of truth with our Father. As we are enabled, by looking through certain optical instruments, to explore the depths of the upper heavens, crowded, as they are, with shining worlds, invisible to the naked eye, so by directing our spiritual vision, through the christian revelation, towards Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, we can see clearly his glorious attributes, and sublime perfections. It is the *pure in heart* only, who are blessed with the privilege and power of *seeing God*. The principles of the gospel of Christ alone can render our hearts pure. *'Through him, therefore, must we have access unto the Father.'*

From this view of the correspondency between the office of Jesus Christ and of the Shekinah of the Hebrew church, we receive light respecting the meaning of a large number of passages in the New Testament, which speak of him as the medium through which spiritual services are to be offered, and spiritual benefits to descend from God. We are enabled by it to comprehend the whole nature and extent of the *mediation* of Jesus, and the difficult doctrine of the *intercession* is entirely cleared up. Instead of the irrational opinion, that Christ acts as a perpetual advocate for us before the Father, which necessarily

implies that the former either knows more concerning us, or takes a deeper interest in our welfare, than the latter ; we are taught by the system of interpretation, now offered, that Christ intercedes between God and us, merely by being the appointed channel through which we are to have intercourse with God. In other words, worship offered through him, who preached in his doctrine the truths of God, and exhibited in his example his will and pleasure, will be offered in truth, with a correct apprehension of the will, purposes, and character of God, and will of course rise acceptably before him. Christ, by thus constantly holding out to our view, in his gospel, declarations, and in his character, illustrations of the will of God respecting us, is ever moulding and fashioning, as it were, our prayers to God, and our meditations concerning his attributes and our duties, and, in this sense, ‘ continually maketh intercession for us.’

There are many other points, in which, I think, the view now presented of Jesus Christ, as ‘ The Word of God,’ sheds light upon the doctrines of our religion. But this investigation has already spread itself over too large a surface. If the principle of interpretation here advocated, should meet with the favorable consideration of those to whom it is to be submitted, it will be easy to carry it on through all those points of opinion, and all those parts of scripture unnoticed in these Letters, to which it may be found to apply. It only remains for me, after recapitulating the heads of the present inquiry, to occupy the concluding Letter, with an interpretation of some of those texts, upon which

light, I think, has been thrown by the previous speculations.

I first endeavoured to ascertain, and to explain, upon principles of language, and of the Jewish dispensation, the adoption and the use of the phrase, 'The Logos,' or 'Word of the Lord.' I next attempted to trace, by the aid of the faint glimmerings of scattered light, which are shed, at the present day, upon the remains of the early ages of the world, the condition of the several distinct systems of polytheism, the progress of a philosophizing spirit with respect to them, and the character of those eclectic systems, which were formed by the admixture of their several parts in various combinations. We noticed the adoption of the Jewish phrase abovementioned, into those separate and mixed schemes of Philosophy, and followed it up to the time of the apostles, and glanced at the strange errors which had become associated with it, and at some of the innumerable false projects and systems of religion, which the madness and folly of unlicensed speculation had engendered. The survey of the ground thus far traversed, procured but a part of the materials to be used in interpreting 'The Logos,' or 'Word.' We acquired a knowledge of the *false* notions attached to it, which the apostolic writers would be desirous of refuting, and against which they may be supposed to have spoken and written. And at the same time we met incidentally with illustrations and explanations of several dark and difficult passages in the New Testament, and discovered, as I think, the seeds of many of those errors, which afterwards sprung

up with a vigorous growth in the church, and which even yet overshadow the truth, and deprive it of its own proper nourishment and support.

My next object was to ascertain the *true* meaning of 'Word' or 'Logos,' as used by the scriptural writers. Instead of searching for it where it has so often been searched for in vain, in the Greek or other Heathen schools of Philosophy, we returned to the Jewish nation and church, whence, I think, there can be no doubt it derived its origin. We examined their use of a similar and exactly corresponding phrase, and endeavoured to establish its meaning. That meaning I consider John and the early Christians to have applied to Jesus Christ, and to his gospel. We found it to be, in almost all its important aspects, included in the common, popular, and obvious senses of *word* as we use it at this present time. Christ I think to have been 'The Word of God,' because he was the instrument or agent, which conveyed the will and purposes of God to man. He was 'The Word of God,' in as much as he was the image of the moral attributes and principles of God.* And his gospel was 'The Word of God,' in the same manner in which we speak of *words*, understanding, thereby, the meaning and sense which they convey. These were the principal, although not the only meanings, which we found it capable of bearing. I exhibited the harmony and unity of the Jewish and Christian dispensations upon

* This was a literal and obvious sense of *word*, in those ages, when hieroglyphic writing was in vogue, and continued to be an obvious meaning, of course, long after it was disused.

this scheme, Christ bearing the same office which the Shekinah formerly bore ; and, finally, in a few words, I pointed out the glorious dignity and exaltation which it ascribes to Jesus Christ, as the chosen organ of communication between the Creator and the creature, as the mediator, through whom all the truths, and precepts, and promises of religion have come down to us, and as the continual intercessor, through whom all prayer and spiritual service, if it would be acceptable, must go up to the Father.

LETTER VI.

BEFORE I enter upon an examination of the Proem of John's Gospel, and of such other passages of scripture as are illustrated by the views which have been presented in the previous Letters, I will admonish myself, and all who may follow me in the interpretations now to be attempted, to bear in mind the third reflection at the conclusion of the fourth Letter. There was so great a variety of opinions, and of shades of opinion, upon religious and philosophical subjects then in the world, which may have entered into the views, and influenced the reasonings of the sacred writers, and of many of which we are, and must ever be ignorant, that we cannot hope to develop the entire force and sense of their language, and must expect, after all the light which we can collect is thrown upon it, to find some obscurity still remaining.

With expectations and requisitions thus moderated, let us now proceed to the accomplishment of the design of this inquiry, the interpretation of those passages of scripture, in which the Logos, or Word, is contained, and of such other passages explained or illustrated by the view now taken of its import, as may happen to be suggested. I begin with the first eighteen verses of the Gospel of John, and, in order to present them as clearly and as fully as possible to examination, I will extract them, in the first place, as they stand in the original Greek, and also in the commonly received version.

1. *Εν αρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.*

2. *Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς.*

3. *Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο· καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν, ὃ γέγονεν.*

4. *Ἐν αὐτῇ ζωῇ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων·*

5. *Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτοῦ οὐ κατέλαβεν.*

6. *Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπιστάλμινος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὀνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννης·*

7. *Οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσι δι' αὐτοῦ.*

8. *Οὐκ ἦν ἐκείνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.*

9. *Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχομένοις εἰς τὸν κόσμον.*

10. *Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ᾔγνω.*

11. *Εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθε, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτοῦ οὐ παρέλαβον.*

12. *Ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτοὺς, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γίνεσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ·*

13. *Οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγέννηθησαν.*

14. *Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο· καὶ ἐσκηνώσιν ἐν ἡμῖν, (καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς πατρὸς πατρός), πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.*

15. *Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ κερκαγε, λέγων· Οὗτος ἦν, ὃν εἶπον· Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχομὸς, ἐμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν· ὅτι πρῶτος μου ἦν.*

16. *Ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος.*

17. *Ὅτι ὁ ἵεμενος διὰ Μωσέως ἐδόθη· ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀληθεία διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο.*

18. *Θεοὶ οὐδεὶς ἰσάκεαι πώποτε· ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς, ὃς ἦν εἰς τοὺς καιροὺς τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐκείνος ἐξηγήσατο.*

1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2. The same was in the beginning with God.

3. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made, that was made.

4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men,

5. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John;

7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;

13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

15. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying; This was he of whom I spake; He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.

16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17. For the law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

In attempting to disclose the meaning of this passage, I shall go through it step by step, gathering, as I advance, the sense of the successive clauses, and endeavouring not to anticipate, or take for granted, anything. And I hope to show, that the view which has been presented of the signification of Logos, and the materials which have been collected in these Letters, when applied to its interpretation, enable us to discern its import and bearing, and to explain to a great extent, if not entirely, the force and sense of each expression and word of which it is made up.

V. 1. The first verse contains three distinct propositions, in each of which Logos, or the Word, is used. I consider it as bearing, in this place, the third signification ascribed to a Shekinah, page 122 ; namely, ‘an appointed medium or bearer of God’s will.’

The first proposition, then, amounts to this ;—‘In the very beginning, at the creation, there was an appointed medium of communication from God to men ; there was some being, or some thing, whose office it was to act as the bearer to the world of the Divine will.’ This is a natural, clear, and intelligible meaning of the expression, *Εν αρχῇ ην ὁ λογος*. But we perceive more fully its pertinency and its point, when we reflect that it was a popular objection to Christianity in the first ages, that it was promulgated at so *late* a period of the world. It was alleged, that if the gospel were, as its advocates maintained, a communication from God to men, it was not reasonable to suppose that so many generations would have been permitted to pass away,

and so many hundreds, nay, even thousands of years be allowed to elapse, previous to its being sent.

In proof of the existence of such an objection to our religion, at that early period, John Jones gives the following testimony. ‘Nothing was more common and general than this objection against the christian doctrine; and it was an objection, which applied with greater force at the first promulgation of the gospel than in subsequent times.* Celsus urges that Jesus lived but a very few years before, and that he was but *recently* born. Eusebius, towards the beginning of his Ecclesiastical History, has, in opposition to it, endeavoured to prove the antiquity of the christian faith. Justin Martyr, in his greater Apology, ch. lxi., glances at the same argument, and in reference to it, delivers this candid remark; “All those who lived a rational life, though deemed atheists, were Christians, such as Socrates and Heraclitus, among the Greeks; Abraham, Elias, and others, among the Barbarians.” But to ascend to the times of the apostles, Paul seems to have the same object in view, when he says, that Christ *came in the fulness of time*, Gal. iv. 4., and gave his testimony *in his proper season*, 1 Tim. ii. 6; *He manifested his Logos in the proper times*, Titus i. 3. This position, which is so emphatically and repeatedly stated, must have been intended against some, who alleged that the time of his appearance was not the proper one.’* We may suppose that John, in answer to this objection, asserts, in a few words, substantially what follows;—

* J. Jones’s Illus. p. 17, note.

‘We do indeed believe that Jesus Christ was the *Word of God*, that is, conveyed to us his will and his truth, but it is not just to charge us with maintaining that he was the first who ever discharged that office, for we do not believe that God spake to the world for the first time by and through him. From the beginning, on different occasions, and under various forms, “at sundry times, and in divers manners, he has spoken to our Fathers.” Let it be understood, therefore, that in saying that there has been a communication made, a Word spoken from God to man through Jesus Christ, we do not assert any new and unprecedented fact. Throughout the duration of the church of Israel there was such a communication. Nay, more, in the very beginning, in the earliest notices we possess of the history of the world, in its creation, we are informed that God spake to the world. It is not true that the world has for so long a period been left without a witness of God in it, or that we hold that Christ our Master bore the first communication ever made from God to man. We do indeed believe that it was his glorious office to convey to us the will of his Father, and in this sense to be his Word; but at the same time we believe that Divine communications have been made to mankind before his time; that under other forms there has been a Word from God to man. There was indeed such a Word even in the beginning, at the creation.’

The whole force of the second proposition, *καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν*, is contained in the preposition *πρὸς*. Upon the supposition that it means ‘*immediate connex-*

ion,' a very clear and important signification is given to the words of the evangelist. Now this appears to have been the sense which Schleusner attached to it, in this connexion. He assigns his eighth definition to it as used in the above proposition, and that definition is contained in the following Latin prepositions, 'apud, prope, ad,' 'with, near to, at,' evidently meaning *local contact*.

In order to put the propriety of attaching this meaning to *προς*, beyond a doubt, I will extract the following from Cappe, whose authority as a verbal critic is certainly preeminent. 'It is well known, that with the accusative, *παρά* has the sense of *προς*. In their natural signification the only difference is, that *προς* signifies *at*, and *παρά*, *by the side of*. *Παρά τῆς πόδας*, Luke viii. 41, is the same with *προς τῆς πόδας*, Mark v. 22; and so in other places. *Καθήμενοι παρά πόδας*, Luke viii. 35; x. 39. *Ἐβίβλητο προς πυλῶνα*, Luke xvi. 20. *Παρά*, with the dative too, has the same sense as *προς*, with the accusative. Compare John xix. 25, 'Ἐισηκισαν παρά τῷ ταυρῷ, with John xx. 11, 'Ἐισηκισεν προς το μνημαίον.' *

Guided and sustained by these authorities and proofs, I interpret *προς* in this connexion, as signifying that the Word came forth directly from God; that there was no intermediate agent employed in producing it; that God as cause, and the Word as effect, were in direct contact, and that in this sense the Word was *with, near to* God. The amount of meaning, in the

* Critical Remarks, Vol. I, p. 24.

mind of the evangelist, and intended by him to be conveyed in these words, will, according to this interpretation, be as follows ;—

‘ It is not true, that the Divine communications and interpositions which have formerly taken place in the world, have proceeded from inferior beings, or other beings than the Supreme Jehovah. Those opinions which now prevail, and which set forth that they have proceeded from one or more Angels (p. 66), from Demiurgus (p. 66), from Eons or Emanations of whatever rank or character, (p. 66), or from an evil being, hostile to the one supreme and benevolent God (p. 67), which some suppose to be the character of the God of the Jews, the being who directed the administration of the ancient church ; these opinions are all entirely erroneous. So also, do those schemes of divine genealogy which some have been wild enough to fabricate (pp. 70, 72) violate the truth, in separating Logos from the Supreme God, by inserting, as they do, one or more beings between them. In opposition and contradiction to all these false opinions, I do now declare, that all revelations, messages, communications, or Words of whatever kind, which have been made to men from above, have proceeded directly and immediately from the Supreme God. There has been no being or agent of any kind intervening to separate them from God. They have emanated from him alone. They have ever been *with him* in the sense in which I now have explained this expression.’

After having, in this way, removed a large amount of error, and settled clearly the truth, the evangelist goes on still further, and in the next proposition, *καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος*, ‘the Word was God,’ or ‘God was the Word,’ positively and precisely asserts the position for which, following the footsteps of Lowman, I argued in the former part of the Fifth Letter. As there is no occasion to enter into a minute verbal criticism upon the words of this proposition, I will proceed directly to present, as I have done in the case of the two previous propositions, in a free paraphrase, the ideas which, it is probable, were associated in the mind of John with this brief sentence, the errors which he intended to refute, and the truth which it was his purpose to establish by it;—

‘So far indeed from the truth are those opinions to which I have already referred, which attribute all the communications of a Divine nature, heretofore made to the world, to other beings than Jehovah, that on the contrary, it is true, that in making these communications, no other being, whether good or evil, high or low, has ever been employed at all. God himself and alone has acted and been concerned in them. And I admonish the Jews, who, in the use of their religious phraseology, have been accustomed to speak of Divine communications made to their Fathers under the name of ‘Word,’ not to be deceived by heathen philosophers, who have misapprehended the import of that name, and have fallen into the error of supposing that it is the title of a different being from the one Jehovah, as too many already have been (p. 77), into

the belief that another being did act in those Divine appearances and communications to which that title is applied. I also admonish all Christians to avoid this error. It was for a wise and good purpose that the instruments and means of the Divine communications were described by that title. But let it never be forgotten that they were merely the instruments, the means of communication, the Word of God, and of no other being. It was no *Æon*, nor Angel, nor second divine person, that spoke to men in former times. It was God himself who spoke to them. Those appearances and objects which were called the Word, were carefully defined to be, they were by the ancient worshippers universally understood to be, the name, the presence, the manifestation of the glory of the only true God; they were to them the sign of God's being and presence, and in this sense were God to them. In like manner, and upon the same grounds, I say that the 'Word was God,' for God alone acted or was concerned in the Word, and it was the only distinct signature of his existence and presence, and the only source from which certain information was derived concerning him.'

Interpreting the words of John in this manner, we instantly perceive their pertinency and force. They are clear, simple, and concise. The doctrine conveyed by them is gradually unfolded, step by step, until it amounts to this;—

'There were, in the very beginning, Divine communications to men. They have not proceeded from inferior or other beings, but directly and immediately

from the Supreme God. The Supreme God has himself acted and been concerned in them.'

It refutes, in fact, many of the false doctrines exhibited in Letter IV., and wholly confirms the arguments and positions of Letter V.

Having explained in this manner the first verse, which appears to be complete in itself, and distinct from what follows, I now proceed to the two next verses, which also seem to constitute an entire paragraph.

V. 2 and 3. The second verse is merely a repetition of the first and second proposition in the first verse. The third verse is translated, 'All things were made by *him*, and without *him* was not anything made that was made.' In some translations '*it*' has been used instead of '*him*,' and to us, who have no such idiom in our religious phraseology, as the Logos or Word, the true meaning is much more readily conveyed by the former than by the latter. Still, however, we can easily imagine how natural it would be to apply the masculine pronoun to a word, which was used as a title of office, as I have represented Logos or Word to have been. The meaning of this verse I consider to be something like this ;—

'It is not true that the creation is the work of Angels or of inferior spirits, or that part of it is the production of a good, and part of it of an evil being. In all its parts and laws and relations, it was framed by the interposition, the command, the Word of God himself. The origin of all things is to be ascribed to him.'

This mode of attributing the creation of all things to the Word of the Lord, was always familiar to the Jews. Psal. xxxiii. 9. 'He *spake*, and it was done; he *commanded*, and it stood fast.' Peter has the same use of language, 2 Epis. iii. 5. 'By the *word* of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.' In speaking to Gentiles, unacquainted with Hebrew phraseology, a judicious Jewish convert to Christianity, would disuse this idiomatic expression. We find that Paul, in his noble speech at the Areopagus, expressed the same idea, conveyed in the above quotation from Peter, in a different manner. Acts, xvii. 24. '*God* that made the world and all things therein.'

V. 4. In attempting to interpret the fourth verse we should bear in mind the reflection which was repeated at the commencement of this Letter. It will be impossible to develope its whole meaning without understanding all the ideas associated in the mind of the writer with *Λόγος* and *Φῶς*, which it would perhaps be unreasonable for us to expect to be able to do. All that we know, is, that both these words were honored with high stations in the philosophical schemes of that age. In the system of Valentinus (p. 72) *Λόγος* is considered as a spiritual being, distinct from, but equal in rank to Logos. *Φῶς* was used as expressive of that being from whom truth and moral light were derived; and *Σκοτος*, or *Σκοτία*, was the name given to the corresponding and opposite being, the source of error and of moral darkness. In the Oriental Philosophy, as has been already mentioned, these two words

were the titles of the good and evil spirit or deity, respectively.

As we do not precisely understand the import of these words in the philosophizing phraseology of that age, it will be most safe and judicious not to attempt to explain the evangelist's meaning, beyond what is obvious and evident upon the plainest principles of interpretation. Governing ourselves by this restriction, it seems clear that John, in this verse, overthrows the opinions which ascribed a distinct existence to Life and Light, and declares that the Word had discharged the same offices which they were erroneously supposed to have exercised.

'In him was Life.' In these words John declares that Life was not a separate being from the Word, but that all the ideas, which had been associated with that term, should be considered as included within the meaning of Word.

In the remaining clause of the verse, Life is used in the place of Word, and is said to be the same with Light also. 'The Life was the Light of men;' and the evangelist declares that those ideas, which had been attached to Light, viewed as the source from which men receive a knowledge of truth, should be connected with Life, or, since Life was declared to be comprehended in Word, should be connected with Word, and considered as embraced within its meaning.

If this view of the import of the above expressions be correct, the substance of John's declarations contained in them, is this;—'All which is attributed to the

agency of Life and Light, has been produced by the interposition, the command, the Word of God.' In confirmation of this interpretation, we find that both these words are applied, together with others employed in the philosophical genealogies of the day, such as Truth, to Jesus Christ, who was preeminently '*The Word*.' John xi. 25. Our Lord says, 'I am the resurrection and the *Life*,' and also xiv. 6. 'I am the way, and the truth, and the *Life*.' John viii. 12. 'I am the *Light* of the world,' and xii. 36. 'While ye have *Light*, believe in the *Light*, that ye may be the children of *Light*.' Indeed it seems to me to be quite evident that our Saviour himself, as well as this evangelist, was much addicted to the practice of adopting phrases current in the speculations of his day, and of applying to them a true christian meaning. That John uses Life and Light, as synonymous with Logos, and endeavours in this passage to refute the opinion that they were the titles of distinct and separate beings, appears upon the whole, to be the most reasonable view which can be taken in interpreting it.

V. 5. In the fifth verse, the writer, having adopted Light in the place of Word, and as synonymous with it, is very naturally led into a figurative form of expression, the general import of which is clearly intelligible. There is some difficulty, however, in determining its literal meaning. It is not settled to the general satisfaction of the critics, what is the precise sense of *κατελαβεν*. Wakefield translates it 'hindered,' Campbell, 'admitted,' Newcome, 'overspread,' and the Common Version, 'comprehended.' It appears to

me that Campbell approached nearer than the others to the true signification. He is sustained by the authority of Schleusner. Whichever translation may be adopted, the interpretation which I propose, will not, in any essential respect, be affected.

In accordance with Campbell, therefore, I thus translate this verse. 'And the Light shone in darkness, and the darkness admitted it not.' And regarding light as used in this, as it evidently is in the following verse, as a synonyme with Word, the sense intended to be expressed appears to be equivalent to this;—

'There was a Word, or Divine communications were made, in former times, to a part of the world, the descendants of Abraham; to them, while darkness rested upon mankind, did a light appear; a knowledge of God and of his truth was conveyed to them. But those nations to whom no such Word came, and no Divine communications were made, continued in error and ignorance; they did not receive the truths which were revealed to the Hebrew church; they would not allow the darkness by which they were enveloped, to be penetrated and dispelled by that light which beamed upon the Jews.'

If this interpretation be correct, the fifth verse is to be considered as containing a concise description of the state of revealed religion during the existence of the Mosaical dispensation.

V. 6, 7, and 8. The three next verses are easily understood. The evangelist gradually approaches the christian revelation, removing errors and establishing

truth as he advances. The precise relation which John the Baptist sustained towards it is here clearly and positively determined. The sixth verse needs no explanation or comment. The occasion and pertinency of the seventh and eighth would be obscure and inexplicable to us, were we not made acquainted with the fact of the existence of the heresy already mentioned, (p. 77,) of the Sabians or advocates of the claim of John the Baptist to a greater authority than Jesus possessed. In the place referred to, I informed the reader that there was an interesting account of this sect to be found in the 'Introduction of Michaelis.' He will there see that it was declared by them that Jesus was not the true Light, but that John the Baptist was the only true Light. How fully does the knowledge of this fact admit us to the sense of the words of the evangelist ;—

'This same John came merely as a witness. It was his office to give testimony in favor of the Light, in order to induce all men to receive that Light as true. John was not, as some of a certain sect which adopts his name assert, in any respect that Light. The extent to which his official dignity and action reached, was solely to perform the part of a witness, to proclaim and verify that Light. John was not the true Light.'

V. 9. The evangelist, having thus determined the character and office of John, returns to the main subject in which he was engaged. 'But there was a true Light,' says he, 'that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' As the use of the word Light, in the place

of Word, ceases at this point, I will, after having expressed the general sense of the present verse, proceed with greater facility in the interpretation of the remaining verses, which are, comparatively, easy of explanation, there being no variation or mixture of the titles Life, Light, and Word, in them. The substance of the writer's meaning, when he used these words in the ninth verse, I suppose to be this ;—

‘John was not indeed the bearer of a Divine revelation ; but there has been such a revelation. The office of bearing God's will, of acting as his Word to men, has been discharged. And the instruction conveyed by this Word will not be confined, as it formerly has been, to a particular people or a circumscribed region, but is intended to be diffused over the whole earth, to be communicated to every individual inhabitant of the world.’

V. 10 and 11. Having thus arrived at the final revelation, John goes on in a narrative of beautiful simplicity, and unrivalled closeness and brevity of expression, to describe the prominent circumstances connected with this last and universal revelation or Word. Notwithstanding the ingenious reasoning of Cappe and others, I cannot convince myself that *κοσμος* is confined in its signification to the Jewish people or church. Indeed, I think it will be apparent to any one that such an interpretation very much reduces the force and sense of this passage. I consider *κοσμος* as meaning either the external creation, the outward world, or the human inhabitants of the world. For this opinion I have the authority of Gataker, and surely there is no

better authority. 'Quin et ~~nos~~ *pro tota mundi fabrica* Græcis est familiare, et peculiariter quandoque *pro cælo*. At sacris scriptoribus, præter mentem ipsam, varie admodum adhibetur; nunc *pro hominibus mundi ipsius incolis* generatim sumptis, sive *pro genere humano*.'* In this verse it appears to be used in both the senses just mentioned, and the meaning of the writer is this;—

'A Word from God came to the world, and although it was by a Word or command from God that the world was created, still the men of the world would not receive this Word, would not admit the idea of a Word being spoken or sent to them from God.'

The evangelist further says, 'Even the Jews, although they were accustomed to the reception of such heavenly communications, and had been distinguished by the residence, during a long period of their history, of the Word of God among them, even they would not as a nation receive the Word which has, in these latter times, been uttered to mankind.'

V. 12 and 13. In these verses the writer asserts the character and dignity of this Word or revelation, and draws a distinction between it and the Word as it formerly came to the Jews. To be 'Sons of God' means to be admitted to a knowledge, and service, and worship of him in a spirit of truth. It was applied to the Jews, as they were the only nation to whom the true God had been revealed, and who had been favored by communications from him, and admitted

* De Novi Instrumenti Stylo, c. v. p. 36. E.

to the honor of being called his people, his church, his worshippers. 'Name,' we have seen (p. 114,) was a title of the Shekinah. To 'believe on his name' it is probable then, is another form of expressing the belief, that a given person or object is a true Shekinah, or Word of God. We are now prepared to interpret the twelfth verse. Its meaning is this;—

'Whoever receive this word and believe in it, as a communication or manifestation from God, as a true and proper Shekinah, they are instantly admitted to all the privileges which the Jews have formerly enjoyed exclusively. They are forthwith received into the church and worship of God, and, by knowing the will and attributes of him, the Supreme Father, become his children and sons.'

In interpreting the next verse I prefer to quote the words of Cappe. 'One can hardly doubt that the evangelist meant to say, that no means whatever by which the privileges of the Jewish dispensation were obtained, were either sufficient or necessary to entitle to the privileges of the Christian. Not only those whose parents were both Hebrews, and those whose parents were one a Hebrew and the other a proselyte, were entitled to the privileges of the Jewish peculiarity; proselytes also of Gentile parents were entitled to them as soon as they were circumcised. The first were born *ἐξ αἱμάτων*, they were of Abraham's blood on *both* sides; the second, being the offspring of a passion, which, to gratify itself, wandered beyond the limits of Abraham's family, were *ἐκ θεληματος σαρκος*, and proselytes, being in the language of the Jews the *children*

of him by whom they were converted, were *ex θελογματος ανδρος*.^{*} John therefore in this verse says;—

‘All who became Sons of God by believing in, and receiving the Word of God, then sent to the world, were not admitted to this privilege upon any of the conditions of admission to the privileges of the ancient dispensation, but they were admitted solely because it was the good pleasure of God that all should be regarded as his people and children who should receive the communication then made to all mankind.’

V. 14. This verse is the most important part of the whole passage, and, when its phraseology is closely examined, not only receives a complete explanation from the views presented in the last Letter, but is in itself a most powerful confirmation of those views. I shall first consider the several clauses and expressions of which it is made up, and then give its sense and bearing taken as a whole. As Gataker has proved, *σαρξ* means ‘man,’ ‘human nature,’ or ‘human being.’[†] In such a sense I receive it in this place; ‘And the Word became or was constituted a human being.’ Formerly inanimate objects, such as the burning bush, the cloud, or the fire, discharged the office of conveying God’s will to men, that is, were his Word; but the Divine communication, of which John is here speaking, was borne by a man; a man, in this instance, was the Word.

‘And dwelt among us.’ *Εσκηνοεν* was evidently suggested to the evangelist by the view of the Word

^{*} Critical Remarks, Vol. I. p. 82, 83.

[†] De Stylo, &c. c. v. p. 35. E.

which I have supposed him to entertain. It was the phrase applied to the Divine appearances or Shekinah, and the proper sense which it conveys would be expressed by such a translation as this ;—‘ This man, the Word, was, as a Shekinah, in the midst of us.’ This view of the meaning of the above word did not escape the observation of Cappe. He says, ‘ In the term σκηνοῦν, *tabernacled*, there is a figurative allusion to the tabernacle and the temple under the Jewish dispensation.’ *

To confirm this view of the Word as a Skekinah, we have only to examine the following clauses. ‘ And we beheld his glory.’ By turning to page 113, we shall see that ‘ glory ’ was one of the titles applied, in the ancient church, to the Divine appearances. And in this place John applies it to the Word. ‘ As of the only begotten of the Father.’ The meaning here is probably this ;—‘ Such a glory as that only can possess which is derived immediately from God.’ When *μολογῆς* or *πρωτογενῆς* are applied to the Word in the writings of the New Testament, they probably derive all their pertinency from the fact that systems of Philosophy and genealogy prevailed, (pp. 70, 72,) in which Logos or Word was neither the only begotten nor the first begotten.

In the next clause the nature of the glory possessed by the Word of which John is here speaking, is defined ‘ full of grace and truth.’ *Χαρις* means ‘ favor,’ ‘ benevolence,’ ‘ beneficence,’ ‘ goodness.’ And the whole expression probably amounts to this ;—The

* Crit. Rem. Vol. I. p. 92.

Word which John was then describing differed from all former Words in this respect. The 'glory' which had accompanied the Shekinah in the ancient church was only a material glory, made up of awful and sublime visible appearances or audible sounds, and suited to produce admiration, wonder, and terror, in the minds of all beholders. But the 'glory' which accompanied the last Word was of an entirely different kind. It did not consist of circumstances of external grandeur. It was not of a material, but of a moral kind. It shadowed forth those Divine attributes of mercy and goodness which are the true characteristics of the Supreme Being. It represented God precisely as he should be represented to us. It was in such a sense as this that the Word, which became a man, was said by John to be 'full of goodness and truth.'

Upon the whole then, it would seem that the meaning attached by its author to this very important verse was something like this.

'Instead of being communicated, as in former times, through inanimate objects, the will of God has now been conveyed to us by the agency of a human being. A man has, in this instance, acted as the Word of God. Such a Word has been as a Shekinah, has tabernacled among us. We have ourselves beheld it surrounded by such a glory, as can belong only to what proceeds directly from God. Its glory was not in the least like that which accompanied former Divine appearances. The Word or Shekinah, which we have seen, was attended with a more sublime, even with a

moral glory. It was full of grace or goodness and truth.'

It seems to me that the phraseology and construction of this single verse are enough to demonstrate that John viewed the Logos or Word, precisely as I have attempted to explain and interpret it in Letter V., as equivalent to, and as corresponding with, a Shekinah, such as had appeared in the Hebrew church. At any rate, it is certain that the view which I have there given, is adequate to the full explanation of each clause, expression, and word, in this verse.

V. 15. As it is of no importance to the general object of these Letters, to settle the question, with respect to the proper relative position of this verse, I shall not agitate it at this time, but shall proceed to its interpretation, taking it up in the place in which it stands in our Common Version. Let it be observed that the evangelist has thus far discoursed concerning the Word in its general, official character only. He has, indeed, spoken of it, as it consisted of a human being. But no particular person has yet been mentioned as discharging this office, and possessing this character. We must consider, therefore, that he is regarding the Word in the light in which I explained it in Letter V., as an office, which had existed before, and in the very beginning, and which was capable of being contemplated independently of the objects by and through which it was exercised.

Bearing this consideration in our minds, the words of this verse become plain and intelligible. We are relieved from the necessity of resorting to nice phi-

logical speculations respecting the meaning of *εμπροσθεν* and *πρωτος*. We can view them as possessing their natural and obvious significations. Indeed, I do not perceive in what manner we can divest them, or at least one of them, of reference to time, without robbing *ενωθεν* of all force and pertinency whatever. I consider the meaning of this verse to be in substance the following ;—

‘ This Word, which I have described as a man, and of which we have seen the glory, is the Word concerning which John gave his testimony, when he uttered this declaration ;—“ This is the Word of whom I have spoken. And, although it is to come after me, still it is not after me, for it has existed before me. There is to follow me one whose office it will be to make communications from God to men, an office, in truth, which at sundry times, and in divers manners, has been exercised before my day.” ’

V. 16. This verse has immediate reference to the fourteenth, and is a continuation of it. Before I proceed to express its meaning, it will be proper to notice the phrase at its conclusion, *χαρις αντι χαριτος*. It has, to a very great extent, exercised the ingenuity, the industry, and the patience of the critics. Gataker * collects an abundance of various interpretations which have been invented. It seems to me that Cappe † offers the most probable conjecture respecting its meaning. It is certainly the most agreeable to the

* De Stylo &c. c. xxvii. p. 719.

† Crit. Rem. Vol. I. p. 113.

connexion, of any which have been proposed. He thus translates and explains it.

‘Gift for gift. *Avri* signifies *against, in proportion to, according to*. It is well known, that among other relations, this preposition denotes that of correspondence, of similitude; or equality, or proportion, in point of excellence; measure, value, frequency, diversity, &c., and this in a great variety of forms.’ He also says that it is used in the sense of *secundum, according to*, referring to a rule of direction and of distribution. ‘In like manner,’ says he, ‘we use the terms *against, for*, as man against man, man for man; stroke against stroke, stroke for stroke; of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace, or gift for gift; that is, from the fulness of Christ, in similitude, in correspondence, in proportion, in equality to the grace or gifts which he received for us, and with which he was filled by God, we have received from him and been filled by him. In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, and to like extent, and with like variety, the church was filled by him, Coloss. ii. 9, 10.’ Following this interpretation, of Cappe, the sense of the whole verse becomes something like this;—

‘The glory which filled and surrounded the former Shekinah, or Word, could not be communicated or imparted. It was confined to one separated and fixed object. This was intimated in the very name applied to it. Shekinah literally means a particular station, a fixed residence. But it was not so with the glory of the Word which we have seen. That was capable of being imparted. It was a moral glory

which every man may receive in its fulness, and exhibit to all around him. We, his followers, have received of that glory which he was full of. As he had received from his Father all moral beauty and excellence, so, in like manner, and to the same extent, his followers can receive of him. His glory was the image which he exhibited of the pure and holy attributes of God. By exhibiting the same attributes in our characters, we can form the image of God within us, and surround ourselves with the same glory which our Master possessed. His glory did not consist of material grandeur, which no man can appropriate, but of that moral sublimity of character which every man can learn of him to make his own.'

V. 17. In this verse the writer mentions Jesus Christ, personally, for the first time, and in a manner so entirely artless and incidental, that it strengthens my impression that in the preceding verses he was speaking of his office, and not of his person. The ideas expressed in this verse are clearly discernible.

'The former dispensations,' says the evangelist, 'that, for instance, in the establishment of which Moses was concerned, were of a strict and severe character. They conveyed to us merely those positive laws which it was the purpose of God that we should obey. But the present communication from Heaven, that which Jesus Christ was appointed to make, is of a different kind. It is a full and true account of the love which the Father exercises towards us, of the benevolence, mercy, and unbounded goodness of his character, of his ways, and of his designs. In

this sense was Jesus Christ the Word, by and through which grace and truth have been communicated and made known to us.'

V. 18. This verse has been explained in a previous Letter, p. 95. The force of *μωϋστης* has been pointed out, p. 163. The expression, 'which is in the bosom of the Father,' means, 'who is beloved by the Father, and admitted by him into his most secret counsels.' And it is highly appropriate to our Lord, when his office is viewed in the light, in which I have sought to present it in these Letters. There is nothing else in this verse which calls for remark or explanation. Here ends the Preface of John's Gospel.

I am fully aware that in the interpretation of these verses I have not done justice to my view of the Word, as I have attempted to explain it to you in these Letters. If that view should meet with the favorable consideration of the learned, and other minds be led to apply themselves to an elucidation of this very important passage, upon similar principles to those which have guided me in its examination, I do not entertain a doubt that much more light may be shed upon it. Many deficiencies will be perceived, and whatever errors there may be will be detected and removed. There may, as was anticipated, be some difficulty and obscurity in these verses still, when they shall have received all the illustration which the view now taken of the Word or Logos is capable of reflecting upon them. If I am not much deceived, however, they are now presented in a more intelligible and satisfactory light, than they have been upon any other theory

of interpretation. They are made to bear a master stroke and important meaning. They constitute an appropriate introduction to the narrative of the coming and life of our Lord. Every sentence and every word, appears to have some definite and important meaning. The Proem, taken as a whole, is not only a being misplaced, obscure, or unimportant, but full of the most valuable information concerning the Logos and Divinity. In its few brief sentences is contained a clear and concise history of the divine revelations to men. It represents the Christian dispensation as a continuation and completion of the previous dispensations, and shows the connexion and consistent disjunctions between it and all that had gone before. It describes the office of Christ, the character of his religion, and declares the efficacy of its design.

The simplicity of its phraseology will, I think, be readily disposed, if it may not convince the reception of the theory put forth in the Proem, which supposes that the Logos or Word was the first and the other scripture which had been derived from its appearances in the ancient

the passage, in order to leave the meaning, which I suppose it to be. I will repeat, in a very free manner, which are expressed in it. I suppose in the original, the form of

expression by using different words where the same idea is intended to be conveyed, but, in order to prevent misunderstanding, shall preserve, as far as possible, a unity of phraseology. As I consider 'Word,' when rightly understood, to be the proper translation of Logos, it will be used throughout. Let it be borne in mind that its meaning is, 'that which conveys a Divine communication.'

I. THE TRUE THEORY OF DIVINE REVELATION.

V. 1. 'In the very beginning there was a Word.

'That Word proceeded from no other being than the Supreme God.

'The Supreme God himself spoke to men in this Word.'

II. A MORE PARTICULAR STATEMENT OF THE SAME.

V. 2, 3, and 4. 'The Word, as I have just said, proceeded, in the beginning, from God himself.

'It was by the Word or command of God that all things were created, and without it there was nothing created.

'What in the Philosophy of these days is attributed to Life, has been produced by the Word of God. So also what is attributed to Light should be regarded as produced by the Word. Life and Light should both alike be considered as identical with, and as comprehended in the Word. There are no such separate beings. Instead of ascribing anything to their agency, they should be spoken of, if at all, as synonymous with the Word.'

of interpretation. They are made to bear a more instructive and important meaning. They constitute a most appropriate introduction to the narrative of the preaching and life of our Lord. Every sentence is seen to contribute something to the general object. Each phrase, and even word, appears to have some point and pertinence. The Proem, taken as a whole, is found, instead of being misplaced, obscure, or unmeaning, to be full of the most valuable information. It is in itself a Body of Divinity. In its few brief sentences there is contained a clear and concise history of the Divine revelations to men. It represents the christian dispensation as a continuation and completion of previous dispensations, and shows the connexion and the prominent distinctions between it and all that had been made before. It describes the office of Christ, determines the character of his religion, and declares the universality of its design.

An examination of its phraseology will, I think, confirm the favorably disposed, if it may not convince the doubting, in the reception of the theory put forth in my last Letter, which supposes that the Logos or Word, was used by John and the other scripture writers, in a sense which had been derived from its application to Divine appearances in the ancient church, to the Shekinah.

Before I turn from this passage, in order to leave a clear idea of the meaning, which I suppose it to contain, upon your mind, I will repeat, in a very free paraphrase, the ideas which are expressed in it. I shall not vary, as is done in the original, the form of

expression by using different words where the same idea is intended to be conveyed, but, in order to prevent misunderstanding, shall preserve, as far as possible, a unity of phraseology. As I consider 'Word,' when rightly understood, to be the proper translation of Logos, it will be used throughout. Let it be borne in mind that its meaning is, 'that which conveys a Divine communication.'

I. THE TRUE THEORY OF DIVINE REVELATION.

V. 1. 'In the very beginning there was a Word.

'That Word proceeded from no other being than the Supreme God.

'The Supreme God himself spoke to men in this Word.'

II. A MORE PARTICULAR STATEMENT OF THE SAME.

V. 2, 3, and 4. 'The Word, as I have just said, proceeded, in the beginning, from God himself.

'It was by the Word or command of God that all things were created, and without it there was nothing created.

'What in the Philosophy of these days is attributed to Life, has been produced by the Word of God. So also what is attributed to Light should be regarded as produced by the Word. Life and Light should both alike be considered as identical with, and as comprehended in the Word. There are no such separate beings. Instead of ascribing anything to their agency, they should be spoken of, if at all, as synonymous with the Word.'

III. THE REVELATIONS TO THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

V. 5. 'The Word, as it spake to men formerly, came to a world lying in ignorance and error. And men would not resign their errors and receive from it the truth.'

IV. THE CHARACTER AND OFFICE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

V. 6, 7 and 8. 'The new dispensation, that with which we Christians are connected, was introduced in the following manner. A man, named John, was sent to the world, with a Divine commission.

'It was his business, to give such testimony concerning the Word, or bearer of a Divine communication, then about to appear, as would induce men to receive it in its true character and believe in it.

'This John was not, as some since his death, adopting his name and assuming the use of his authority, pretend, that Word. He did not sustain that office. His office reached no further than to give testimony of its approach and its advent.'

V. THE FINAL REVELATION AND ITS UNIVERSALITY.

V. 9. 'But, although John was not that Word, the true Word did soon appear; and, unlike all previous Words, which conveyed instruction not intended to be carried beyond the limits of Judea, the instruction conveyed by this Word was intended to be diffused among all the races and generations of men.'

VI. THE RECEPTION OF THIS REVELATION.

V. 10 and 11. 'And, although the world itself was created by such a Word or command of God, still the

men of the world would not receive it as a Word from God.

‘It came to the Jewish nation which had ever been familiar with such Words, yet even the Jews did not receive it.’

VII. THE PRINCIPLES OF ADMISSION TO THIS
DISPENSATION.

V. 12 and 13. ‘None of the conditions upon which admission could be obtained to the Jewish dispensation, are imposed or required for admission to the privileges and benefits of this religion.

‘Those who receive its bearer as a Word, or the religion itself as a communication from God, and who believe in it as such, are by the good pleasure of God, without any other conditions, admitted to all its privileges.’

VIII. THE MODE IN WHICH THIS REVELATION WAS
COMMUNICATED.

V. 14. ‘In this instance a human being was the bearer of the Divine will, and in this sense became the Word of God to men.

‘And this Word was, like every Word or Shekinah in former times, accompanied by such a glory as proved beyond dispute that it proceeded from God. And we ourselves saw its glory.’

IX. THE CHARACTER OF THIS REVELATION.

V. 14. ‘Instead of displaying, as every previous Shekinah had done, merely the power and majesty of God, this Word made known to us and represented

to us his moral attributes, the sublime goodness and mercy of his paternal character. It was in being the image of these Divine attributes that its glory consisted.'

X. THE TESTIMONY WHICH THE BAPTIST GAVE TO THIS WORD.

V. 15. 'John the Baptist declared that this was a true Word, such as had often during the existence of the ancient church appeared to men, and that it was of this Word he had come to testify.

XI. FURTHER PARTICULARS CONCERNING THIS WORD.

V. 16 and 17. 'The Word which we have seen, and which, in these latter days, has been sent to the world, was unlike the former Shekinah in this respect also. The glory which belonged to it was not confined to it, but was capable of being communicated to others. It was the glory of moral excellence, and all who make advancement in moral excellence receive it and become possessed of it. Just in proportion to its own fulness, had it the power of imparting itself to others. But the fulness of the perfection of God's moral attributes dwelt in it. By forming our characters, then, in imitation of it, we shall be fashioning ourselves after the image of God. And if we become possessed of such an image of the moral character of God, we shall be filled and surrounded by a more sublime glory than any, composed of mere visible and material splendors, which ever accompanied a Shekinah, whether on the Mount or in the Temple.

'Moses acted a part in the dispensation of a system of severe and positive law; but Jesus Christ was the Word in making known to us the goodness and truth,

and in conferring upon us the the gracious benefits of our Heavenly Father.'

XII. THE EXALTED OFFICE OF JESUS CHRIST.

V. 18. 'No man ever before was acquainted with all the sublime and lovely attributes of the character of God. It was reserved to be the unspeakably glorious privilege of Jesus Christ to discharge that office, which admitted him to a knowledge of these attributes, and required of him to make them known to the world.'

Besides the celebrated passage, the interpretation of which is now completed, there are others in the New Testament, in which Logos is used, as was remarked, page 88, in a technical sense. It will be worth our while to attend to them.

In Letter V., page 121, I endeavoured to arrange the several meanings capable of being attached to a title of the Shekinah in the ancient church. As it is supposed that Logos, or the Word, was one of its titles, there is a probability that it will be found to have been used to express all these meanings, or at least the most prominent of them. In looking through the New Testament, we find this conjecture confirmed.

1. The first meaning of a Shekinah, or of the titles applied to it, we have considered to be, the Divine truths and precepts conveyed by it. In the following instances, it is probable that *Logos*, or Word, is intended to bear this sense. The passages, Matt. xiii. 19, seqq., Mark iv. 14, seqq., and Luke viii. 11, seqq., containing the parable of the sower, evidently describe the doctrines and precepts of religion as they are received

into different minds, by this expression, 'The Word.' In the following passages, we have other instances of the same use of Logos.

Luke v. 1.

Εγένετο δὲ ἐν τῇ τῶν ὄχλων And it came to pass, that as
ἐπικυσεῖν αὐτῷ τοῦ ἀκούειν τὸν the people pressed upon him to
ΛΟΓΟΝ τοῦ Θεοῦ. hear the *Word* of God.

John xvii. 17.

Ὁ ΛΟΓΟΣ ὁ σὺς ἀλήθεια ἵστι. Thy *Word* is truth.

Acts iv. 31.

Καὶ ἐλάλου τὸν ΛΟΓΟΝ τοῦ And they spoke the *Word* of
Θεοῦ μετὰ παρήσιας. God with boldness.

xiii. 5, 7, 44.

Κατηγγάλλον τὸν ΛΟΓΟΝ τοῦ They preached the *Word* of
Θεοῦ ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς τῶν God in the synagogues of the
Ιουδαίων. Jews.

Ἐπιζήτησεν ἀκούσαι τὸν ΛΟΓΟΝ He desired to hear the *Word*
τοῦ Θεοῦ. of God.

Πᾶσα ἡ πόλις συνηχθὲν ἀκούσαι The whole city came together
τὸν ΛΟΓΟΝ τοῦ Θεοῦ. to hear the *Word* of God.

Hebrews ii. 2, 3.

Εἰ γὰρ ἡ δι' ἀγγέλων ΛΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ For if the *Word* spoken by
ΛΟΓΟΣ ἐγένετο βεβαίος, καὶ πᾶσα angels was steadfast, and every
παραβάσις καὶ παρακοὴ ἐλάττω transgression and disobedience
ἐνδίκῃ μισθαποδοσίου. received a just recompense of
reward;

Πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφυγεύμεθα τηλικαυ- How shall we escape, if we
της ἀμνηστίας; ὅτις neglect so great salvation, which
ἀρχὴν λαβούσα ΛΑΛΕΙΣΘΑΙ διὰ at first began to be spoken by
τοῦ κυρίου the Lord?

There are very many other passages in the historical books, and in the epistles of the New Testament, in which we find a similar use of Logos.

2. The second sense which I supposed Logos to bear, or be capable of bearing, in consequence of its application to the Divine manifestations in the Hebrew church, was the 'image or representation of the character and will of God.' We find that expressions arising from this signification of the title of his office, as I consider Logos to have been, are frequently applied to Jesus Christ in the scriptures. Some of them will, in the course of this Letter, receive attention. In the mean time, I would suggest, that this view of the meaning of Logos may enable us to give the right interpretation to the following passages.

Philippians ii. 15, 16.

ἵνα γένησθε ἀμώμητοι καὶ ἀκα- That ye may be blameless and
 ραιοὶ, τέκνα Θεοῦ ἀμώμητα ἐν μέσῳ harmless, the sons of God, without
 γένεας σκολίας καὶ ἐπιστραμμυγῆς, rebuke, in the midst of a crooked
 ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φῶστυρες ἐν and perverse nation, among whom
 κόσμῳ, ye shine as lights in the world,
 ΛΟΓΟΝ ΖΩΗΣ ΕΠΕΧΟΝΤΕΣ. Holding forth the Word of Life.

Titus i. 3.

ΕΦΑΝΕΡΩΣΕ δε καιροῖς ἰδίῳς But hath in due times mani-
 ΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ αὐτοῦ. fested his Word.

3. There are several instances of the use of Logos in the third sense, which it derived from its application to a Shekinah, besides that which has been already minutely examined, the Proem of John's Gospel. It will be proper to present a few of these instances.

Luke i. 2.

Καθὼς παρέδωκαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' Even as they delivered them
 ἀρχῆς ΑΥΤΟΠΤΑΙ καὶ ὑπηρέταις unto us, which from the beginning
 γινώσκοντες ΤΟΤ ΛΟΓΟΤ. were eye-witnesses and ministers
 of the Word,

Luke iv. 36.

Και ὅλοντο θαμβῶς ἐπὶ πάντας
καὶ συνάλαλον πρὸς ἀλλήλους, λέ-
γοντες· Τίς ὁ ΛΟΓΟΣ ὅΤΤΟΣ,
ὅτι ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ καὶ δυνάμει ἐντασσε-
ται τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις πνεύμασι, καὶ
ἐξέρχονται.

And they were all amazed, and
spake among themselves, saying,
What a Word is this, for with
authority and power he command-
eth the unclean spirits, and they
come out.

Acts x. 36.

ΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ ἢ ἀπιστοῦσι τοῖς
υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ, ἐπαγγελλόμενος εἰρήνην
διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ὅΤΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΙ
ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΣ.

The Word which God sent unto
the children of Israel, preaching
peace by Jesus Christ: (he is
Lord of all.)

I cannot but think, that upon any other view of the meaning of *Λογος*, than that now presented, this last passage is incapable of a grammatical translation, or of an intelligible interpretation. The application of the last clause to God, would, in the first place, divest it of any signification which could be considered as an addition to the sense and force of the address of the apostle; for the meaning, which it would then receive, is in substance embraced in the previous sentences; and it would also render it an unnecessary and weak expression. There would be no pertinency nor use in saying, in this connexion, that God is Lord of all. Neither can it be applied, as it probably has been in almost all cases, to Jesus Christ; for the introduction of his name into the preceding sentence, is merely incidental to the leading subject, the principal thought of that sentence, and *ὁυτος* must refer to the main subject, not to an inferior and accidental appendage of the previous clause. Now there can be no doubt that *Λογος* is the subject of the former part of this verse. *Λογος*, therefore, is the antecedent of *ὁυτος*.

I consider *Λογος* as used in this place absolutely, or rather elliptically, according to an idiom of speech common, it is probable, in all languages, certainly so in our own, by which we indicate the main subject of a discourse about to be entered upon by merely naming the word which expresses it. For instance, I suppose that Peter, after having asserted that God is no respecter of persons, but that, in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, proceeds to speak of the Word, by which he means a bearer of a message from God, which had in those latter days been sent to men, in the following manner; ‘*As for the Word*, which God has now sent in the person of Jesus Christ to the children of Israel, with a message of peace, it is surely the most exalted Word which has ever been sent, and is intended to be the source of authority, of instruction, and of precept to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews.’ He then goes on to relate the particulars respecting the coming of this Word. He evidently speaks of Jesus Christ in such a manner as can only admit of interpretation upon the supposition that he is called the Word in virtue of the office which he discharged. The *sending of the Word*, and the *preaching peace by Jesus Christ*, are certainly equivalent expressions. The last clause should therefore be translated in the following manner;—‘This Word is the Lord of all.’*

Wakefield perceived the grammatical necessity of regarding *Λογος* as the antecedent of *υιος*, and, not being

* J. Jones’s Illustrations, p. 14. This appears to have been Castalio’s translation also.

aware of the meaning which, as I have endeavoured to show, belongs to *Λογος*, was only able to give the following translation of this verse ;—‘ That doctrine, which God sent to the children of Israel, when he delivered to them a gospel of peace by Jesus Christ, *belongeth equally to all.*’ But the framers of our Common Version have made sad havoc indeed with this whole passage. Having cut off all connexion between *Λογοι* and the last clause of the verse, *ὅτις ἐστὶ πάντων Κυριος*, they were extremely perplexed to know what to do with it. They could not possibly dispose of it in the sentence in which it stood. Finally they fell upon a pretty bold expedient. It was this. They were fortunate enough to find *ῥημα* in the next verse. It seems that *Λογος* sometimes, but not very frequently, was used for *ῥημα*.* Upon the strength of this use of language, they formed their purpose. The following is the thirtyseventh verse ; *Ἑγὼ οἶδατε τὸ γινόμενον ῥημα καὶ ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας, ἀρχαίμοι ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐκηρύχθη Ἰωάννης*. They undertook to consider *ῥημα* as a mere repetition of *Λογον*, although *Λογον*, in the sense in which it was a synonyme with *ῥημα*, would be wholly unintelligible in the thirtysixth verse, and they accordingly thus render the thirtyseventh verse ;—‘ *That Word*, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached.’ In this manner, by dragging *Λογον* from the beginning of one verse, and repeating it in the middle of the next, and by extinguishing *ῥημα* altogether, our translators surmounted what otherwise

* Gataker, *De Novi Instrumenti Stylo*, p. 89.

would have been an insuperable difficulty in their version of this passage. But it seems to me that the difficulty is wholly removed by supposing, as I have done, and as the principles of construction require us to suppose, that *Λογον* is the antecedent of *αυτος*, and that it bears the meaning which I have attached to it. I proceed to give one or two more instances of a similar use of *Logos*.

Acts xiii. 26.

<p>Ανδρες αδελφοι, υιοι γενους Αβρααμ, και οι οτι υμιν φοβουμινου του Θεου, υμιν 'Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ της σωτηριας ταυτης αποσταλη.</p>	<p>Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and who- soever among you feareth God, to you is the <i>Word</i> of this salva- tion sent.</p>
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2 Peter iii. 5.

<p>'Οτι ουρατοι ησαν εκπαλαι, και γη εξ υδατος και δι' υδατος συνε- στηκε, τη του Θεου ΛΟΓΩΝ.</p>	<p>That by the <i>Word</i> of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.</p>
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In this place the apostle evidently means by *Logos* that which conveys and executes the will of God. And he also establishes, it seems to me, beyond dispute, that 'beginning' in the first clause of the Proem of John's Gospel, refers to the natural, material creation.

1 John i. 1.

<p>'Ο ην απ' αρχης, ο ακηκοαμεν, ο ωρακαμεν τοις οφθαλμοις ημων, ο εθασαμεθα, και αι χειρες ημων εψηλαφησαν, περι ΤΟΥ ΛΟΓΟΥ της ζωης.</p>	<p>That which was from the be- ginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the <i>Word</i> of Life.</p>
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How exactly this passage suits the view which I have taken, page 133, of the Word as the title of Christ, drawn from the third meaning of a Shekinah, page 122, is obvious to the most superficial reader. 'His person as an object of sight, and his language as an object of hearing,' are here almost defined to be the Word. The next verse in this chapter affords confirmation of the view given, in the interpretation, John i. 4., of Life. And the introduction of this epistle, throughout, sheds light upon the introduction of the gospel written by the same apostle, and gives much support to the interpretation, which has been offered in this Letter, of that important passage. The last instance I shall present of this use of Logos, is,

Revelation xix. 13.

Και καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ And his name is called *The*
Ὁ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ. *Word of God.*

There can be no doubt that this is meant to be a declaration of the title of Jesus Christ. I cannot but think that any one, who will examine the noble and sublime passage of which this sentence is a part, will discern beneath its magnificent phraseology, a description of the office and agency of our Lord, confirmatory of that presented in Letter V.

The instances which I have now given, are sufficient to illustrate and exhibit the mode in which the view that is taken of Logos, in these letters, can be applied to the interpretation of those passages in scripture, in which it may be found. There are many other places in which it is used besides those here

quoted. And I do not entertain a doubt that its true and full meaning, in every connexion, may be developed by recurring to its sources, in its application to the Divine appearances and communications in the ancient church.

In order to complete my design, it will be necessary to consider some other expressions and phrases applied to Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, upon which light appears to be thrown by the view of his office, which has now been presented.

1. The first passages to which I turn, are those in which such expressions as these are found; 'ascending to heaven,' 'descending from heaven,' &c. For instance,

John iii. 13. 'And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.'

John vi. 38. 'For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.'

John vi. 62. 'What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?'

The most judicious and learned interpreters, such, for instance, as Beausobre and L'Enfant, have generally explained this use of language in the following manner. They consider the expression, 'to ascend to heaven,' a figurative form of words, signifying to penetrate and become acquainted with the secrets of the Divine counsels, and the similar expression, 'to descend from heaven,' as meaning, to have a heavenly nature and origin. To be in heaven, is regarded by them as equivalent to being acquainted with the will and counsels of the Divine mind. Although this inter-

pretation may express a part of the sense of the above phrases, it does not express their whole sense. It appears to me that the last quoted text proves this. It can hardly be disputed that there were associated in our Saviour's mind, with this language, 'What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before,' some allusion to a visible appearance.

When we consider that similar expressions were applied to the Shekinah or Divine appearances in the Old Testament, and that Jesus Christ discharged the same office, and bore the same title with them, an explanation immediately occurs to us. When a Word of God appeared to men, it was said 'to descend from heaven.' When it disappeared and was removed from them, it was said 'to ascend into heaven.' And the Word was always said 'to be in heaven,' because, as Solomon expressed it, 'God's eye was open upon it,' and he was with it, to hearken to the prayer which his servant prayeth towards it.' As the Word, therefore, Jesus Christ was in heaven. As a Word which had appeared, at a particular time, to men, he naturally spoke of himself as having 'descended from heaven.' And as he was shortly to disappear, to be removed up from the sight of men, he spoke of himself as about 'to ascend to heaven.' And as all this was said of himself as the Word, which had from the beginning been ascending and descending from heaven, it was proper and natural to speak of himself as 'having been in heaven before.'

The passages of scripture which I have thus explained, are equally obscure and inexplicable, upon

every other principle of interpretation, to the Unitarian, the Arian, and the Trinitarian. As the view now taken of the above use of language has been suggested to me by Lowman, I will, in conclusion, present to you the remarks which are the result of his inquiries.

'As the Shekinah, or visible Glory, was the seat of the presence of Jehovah, whose dwelling place was in heaven, at the same time that he dwelt between the cherubim in the temple; and therefore the local presence could not confine *Him* to the temple, as a local circumscriptive Deity, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain; so to ascend and descend, to enter and go into the temple, to go out, and to depart from the temple, are understood, in the writings of the Prophets, for the *manifestation of the presence*, by the Glory, or the Shekinah. For they did not mean, they could not mean, that Jehovah so came down from heaven as to leave it, and be confined to the temple. Now, as *God manifest in the flesh, the Word made flesh*, dwelling, *Shekinizing* among us, are manifestly taken from the Divine appearances in the ancient church, are we not sufficiently directed to use them in the same sense in which they are used in the descriptions or explanations of those appearances?'

2. The second class of texts, to which I would apply the foregoing view of the office of Christ, as expressed by Logos, is composed of those which, by appearing to ascribe to his soul preexistence, constitute the foundation of the Arian, and are considered strong supports of the Trinitarian hypotheses; such as;—

John viii. 58. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.'

John xvii. 5. 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.'

The application of such language to himself, by our Lord, involves no contradiction or impropriety, even if we reject the supposition of the preexistence of his soul, provided that the view which I have given of Logos is correct. As the Word of God to men, as the bearer of an office, the functions of which had been partially discharged before, even in the beginning, and which were fully and finally discharged by him, he may, in the view of that office, have spoken of himself as having existed before Abraham, and before the foundation of the world. I shall have further remarks to offer upon this point, when we come to an examination of the use of the word Glory, in the New Testament.

It is proper, however, before we turn from these passages, to observe that the explanation now offered, is not needed to reduce and even destroy their force as proofs of the doctrine of the preexistence. The following remarks, by an ingenious writer, point out the considerations which entirely remove them, and texts like them, as the foundation of this doctrine.

After having translated the first of them in the following manner, 'Before Abraham was born, I have been appointed to the office I am now filling,' he goes on to say ;—'The word to be supplied is *Messiah*, *anointed*, which necessarily refers, not to existence, but to

designation to office, and this alone was necessary, that Abraham might foresee his day. If any one, accustomed only to our modes of speech, should think it strange that our Lord should thus assert his appointment before the time of Abraham, let him consider the following and similar expressions. Rev. xiii. 8. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," that is, appointed to be slain in the Divine counsels, which rendered the violent death of the Saviour essential to the accomplishment of the great ends of his mission. Rev. xvii. 8. "Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world." Ephes. i. 4. "As he [God] hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world." We may add, from the Targum of Jonathan, "Before the world was created, the Lord Jehovah created the law; he prepared the garden of Eden for the just."*

3. The next description of texts, to which I would request your attention, are such as speak of an intimate union and communion between Jesus Christ and the Divine mind. I will repeat a few of them.

John viii. 19. 'Then said they unto him, where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me nor my Father. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.'

John xii. 44. 'He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.' 50. 'Whatsoever

*This quotation is from an article in the *Monthly Repository*, N. S. vol. i. p. 746, on Bloomfield's *Recensio Synoptica Annotationis Sacre*, in which there are some other excellent remarks upon the text John viii. 58.

I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.'

John xiii. 20. 'He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.'

John xiv. 6—11. 'No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I spake not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.'

Coloss. ii. 9. 'For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'

There is one view of these texts which has always occurred to me when I have reflected upon the hypothesis of the trinity. It appears to be the opinion of all those who maintain it, that there is some kind of *division* in the Godhead. They differ as to the amount and character of this division. But they agree in considering the discriminative titles of the three persons, or distinctions, or somewhats, or whatever they may be called, which constitute the whole Godhead, to be 'the Father,' 'the Son,' and 'the Holy Spirit.' And it is the second part or object in this Trinity, that

is, God the Son, whom they consider as in mysterious union with the man Christ Jesus. Now it seems to me that in maintaining this opinion, they are in direct opposition to our Saviour, who never once says that God the Son is in him, but who, on the contrary, in all these texts, and there are others that I have not quoted, expressly declares, that it is with 'the Father,' and with no other Divine being or distinction that he holds intercourse. It is with the Father that he maintains a close and intimate union, whatever that union may be. I cannot perceive in what manner those, who, without any scripture warrant whatever, advocate the doctrine of a *double nature*, by declaring that God the Son was in mysterious union with the man Jesus, can escape, upon their principles of interpretation, the necessity arising from the language of these texts, of going still further, and of supposing God the Father also to enter into this mysterious union ; and thus, instead of a *double*, they would have a *triple* nature in our Saviour, which might prove a very useful doctrine to them, inasmuch as it would afford another *analogy* in addition to those with which, they say, the world is so full, in favor of their trinity !

I return from this digression to the consideration of the true meaning of the last cited passages. It seems to be plain that it cannot be meant by them, that, in his essence, God, or the Father, was in Jesus Christ, in a peculiar sense. If there is any fundamental doctrine of reason, or of revelation, it is this, that the presence, the nature, the essence of God are spread throughout all space ; that he is omnipresent. It is perfect hea-

thenism and idolatry, therefore, to consider him as actually residing, as comprehended in one *place* more than in another, in one *person* more than in another. As long as the Ten Commandments continue to declare sound divinity, so long must he be regarded as a transgressor of them who looks upon any particular person or upon any particular thing as, in an essential and peculiar sense, God.

It is difficult to conceive in what manner those who entertain the opinion that Jesus Christ was God in any proper sense, who allow their imaginations to associate with the conception of his visible person, of his local presence, or of his bodily outline, the idea of God, of actual and personal divinity, can bring themselves into a belief that they are not in direct opposition to all philosophy and religion, both of which distinctly and perpetually declare that God cannot be confined within a visible form or any imaginable outlines. So long as we believe that Solomon uttered the truth when he said, 'But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee,' so long as we receive that most sublime, and awful doctrine of the bible, the omnipresence of God, the diffusion through all hearts and all creatures, and all space, of his being and of every attribute belonging to him, just so long will it be impossible for us to consider these, or any other passages, as setting forth the idea that God was comprehended or included in the person of Jesus Christ.

Neither can we suppose that it is the purpose of these texts to teach merely that God was *present* with

Jesus Christ; for they would, upon this supposition, be deprived of all force and pertinency, since the same can be said of each one of us, and, in truth, of every object even in inanimate nature.

The true signification of such passages as these is indicated in one of them; 'Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.' In being the medium through which God's will comes forth to men, in being the declarer of his attributes, and the revealer of his designs, in being the proclaimer of his laws, and in conveying to men all, in fact, which they knew of the character and purposes of God, Jesus Christ could well be said to contain the fulness of the Godhead. This was the sense in which the Father was in him, and he in the Father. He was in a peculiar union, and enjoyed an intimate connexion, with God; for, in consequence of his office as the Word of God, all revelations were first communicated to him, and he alone was admitted to the secret counsels and determinations of the Divine mind. A close examination of the office of Christ, as designated by Logos, will immediately admit us to the full meaning of all such passages of scripture as have now been under our consideration.

4. I have already, Letter V. p. 138, alluded to the effect produced upon the interpretation of those texts which speak of the *mediation* and *intercession* of Jesus Christ, by the view of his office presented in these Letters as the Word, or perpetual Shekinah, of God. It also explains those expressions which ascribe to him the dignified and exalted character of the future

Judge of men. As the permanent medium or vehicle of God's will to his creatures, it will of course be in the usual exercise of his office for him to give forth the decisions of God's judgment. This seems to be declared in the following passage.

John xii. 47, 48, 49. 'And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the *Word* which I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.'

I would suggest, for your consideration, whether Logos or Word in the following place, is not used in this sense, as the person or official character who will act as the agent of God in the administration of his judgment. The verses which follow seem to confirm this suggestion, and to represent Jesus Christ, 'our high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' as sustaining this office, as the Word which is to judge us.

Heb. iv. 12. 'For the *Word* of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'

When we consider the office of Jesus Christ in this light, what a glorious exaltation and dignity it confers upon him! Through him do we have access to God,

not only in this life, but in the life that is to come; through all eternity he is to stand between us and God, to exercise judgment and mercy in his stead, to be the bearer of his will and purposes to us, and of our prayers and praises to him. He is to preside over the happy and redeemed in heaven, convey to them the blessings of his Father, conduct them in the holy exercises of their worship, and be their leader and guide in an eternal progress of felicity and improvement.

5. I come in the next place to those passages which speak of Jesus Christ as the 'image of God.' This was one of the aspects in which a Shekinah was viewed, (p. 122) and as was intimated in a note to p. 141. was perhaps one of the common meanings attached to Word in the earliest period of its use. There are frequent instances of this form of language, applied to Jesus Christ. For example,

2 Cor. iv. 4. 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the *image of God*, should shine unto them.'

Coloss. i. 15. 'Who is the *image of the invisible God*.'

1 Tim. iii. 16. 'God was *manifest* in the flesh.'

Heb. i. 3. 'Who being the express *image* of his person.'

Such texts as the following are of a similar character, and come under the same interpretation. John xii. 45. 'And he that seeth me, *seeth him that sent me*.'

John xiv. 7. 'If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have *seen him*.'

9. 'He that hath seen me hath *seen the Father*; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?'

It has been shown in the previous Letter that, in one point of view, a Shekinah, as the appearances of a Divine nature made to the Jews, were called, was considered as a representation, an image of God. It exhibited those attributes which men were then capable of apprehending, and which would make the deepest impression upon them, such as power, and majesty. Jesus Christ was the image of God's attributes, and, in one sense, of his will also. He exhibited all those moral perfections which belong to the Father, and constitute his highest glory. It was by making the character of God thus known to men, by illustrating its principles in his life, conversation, and precepts, that he was God's image. It was in this sense that those who knew him, that is, understood the principles upon which he acted, saw in him the Father.

I have shewn, p. 95, that in cases where words, expressing ideas belonging to the perceptions of sight, are applied to God, they were always considered as signifying moral vision, the apprehension of the mind. The application of this principle to the above passages instantly developes their true meaning. As a Shekinah was a visible image of some of the attributes of God, those for instance, of which a correct representation could be given by visible objects, so Jesus Christ was an image of the invisible God, inasmuch as he exhibited in his character, and principles, and manners, those moral attributes of God, which consti-

tute in a peculiar manner his perfections, and which could only in this mode be exhibited. By impressing upon a human character and a human life, a representation of the moral principles and attributes of God, he might well be said to have been 'God manifest in the flesh.' He lived and thought, he spoke and felt, under the guidance of those moral laws which are drawn from the character of God, as from a fountain, and to which he conforms all his designs, and all his doings. Any one, therefore, by knowing Jesus Christ, by comprehending the rules and principles, the spirit and character of his thoughts, and language, and conduct, might with the most perfect propriety be said to know the Father.

I have said that in one sense Jesus Christ was an image of God's will. There is no view in which he can be regarded, which gives a more sublime dignity to his character than this. In his example, made up, as it is, of his life and language, of his conduct and conversation, we have before us a perfect model of that character, which it is the will of God we should aspire to form. Jesus Christ, in all his physical, moral, intellectual faculties, was a man; he was made like unto his brethren. In every respect he held, and now holds, sympathy with our nature. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In no respect does his natural character transcend the capabilities of our natural powers. But in him the human nature, the faculties and affections which belong to us all, are carried up to a point, to which it is the will of God

that we should aspire to carry them ; that is, to perfection. In this sense he is the image of God's will.

As the Jews were directed to turn, during their religious exercises, to their Shekinah, p. 136, so in all our devout contemplations, in our aspirations after excellence, in our contemplations of God, of his will, and of our duties, we should look in faith upon Jesus Christ ; for, in his blameless and holy character, in his pure and perfect example, we have presented to us a bright image of what the Lord our God requireth of us. During the whole course of our spiritual progress, through whatever other scenes of moral advancement we may pass, he will still be in front of us, a glorious model and specimen of the highest possible exaltation of our immortal natures, and when, if ever, we overtake him, and render ourselves in every respect like him, then will every moral attribute be developed and pourtrayed in our own characters, as it is in the character of God. Then shall we ' be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect.'

6. The view of our Lord's office and character, as described by a title which originally derived its import from an application to the Jewish Shekinah, which I have ventured to suggest to your consideration, is in no respect, perhaps, more valuable, than in the light which it sheds upon the use of the word 'glory,' in its various connexions, in the New Testament. I will quote a few of them.

John xvii. 5. ' And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the *glory* which I had with thee before the world was.'

John xvii. 22. 'And the *glory* which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.'

2. Cor. iii. 18. But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the *glory* of the Lord, are changed into the same image from *glory* to *glory*.'

The use of 'glory' in the ancient church has already been described. John has informed us of its import when applied to Jesus Christ. He says that it was not, as before, an outward, material glory, but an inward, moral glory. It was 'grace and truth.' It was the moral sublimity of his character and principles that constituted the glory which accompanied him and belonged to him. There was nothing in the visible appearance of his person which attracted the admiration, or compelled the reverence of men.

The glory which he had in the view of his disciples was a false glory. They adhered to him, and gloried in him, as a temporal deliverer, as one who was to fulfil the selfish and ambitious hopes, and to gratify the violent and revengeful passions of their nation. And they continued to accompany him through what to them was the unaccountable course and manner of his ministry and preaching, because they held fast to the hope that he would soon assume a different character, and enter in earnest upon the work of 'redeeming Israel.' It was absolutely impossible while he lived to remove this false view of his character from their minds. And in this circumstance consisted one important reason for the necessity of his death. A violent and public dissolution, an extinction of life

under such circumstances as to remove all doubt concerning it, and this only, could overthrow or eradicate the false hopes and expectations of his disciples.

It was absolutely necessary, before men could be brought to regard Christ in his true character, before he 'could enter into his glory,' that he 'should suffer.' But when his crucifixion had removed the erroneous expectations and false hopes of his followers, and his resurrection and ascension had confirmed their faith, then they began to perceive his true character, as a Word, or bearer of God's moral law to men, as an image of his moral attributes, and as a spiritual leader; and then did he begin to receive that glory for which he prayed. This is a perpetual glory and it will shine brighter and brighter forever. As the human mind improves men will appreciate more and more the dignity, the purity, the perfection of our Saviour's moral character and precepts. With every advancement of the intellect, or of moral refinement, and of sensibility to what is pure and benevolent, generous and holy, heavenly and divine in the character and conduct, in the thoughts and feelings of men, the glory of Christ will be advanced.

This view of the subject explains, I think, all the passages of the New Testament which contain the word 'glory' as applied to Jesus Christ. In the first text cited above, John xvii. 5, I consider the phrase 'which I had with thee before the world was,' as requiring the same kind of interpretation which must be given to the passage from Revelations xiii. 8, quoted p. 187, 'The lamb slain from the foundation of the

world.' The similarity of the use of language in the two instances, seems to determine that the meaning conveyed is the same. The second text, v. 22, appears to be a description of the same characteristic of the Word made flesh ascribed to it by John i. 16. Jesus declares that he had imparted his glory to his followers ; that is, he had endeavoured to impress upon them the principles, and imbue them with the spirit of that moral excellence which his character exhibited. The last text quoted above, 2 Cor. iii. 18, is a more particular expression of the same idea and of the mode in which the glory of Christ is gradually imparted to his disciples.

But the most striking passage in which this form of thought is used, in connexion with Jesus Christ, remains to be considered. It is the following ;—

Philip. ii . 6—11. ' Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

I do not propose to enter into a minute criticism of these verses. But I request you to apply to them, the general theory of the office of Christ which I have

presented in this inquiry. It is no slight confirmation of its truth to my mind that it affords a clear explanation of this most important, and much controverted passage. The general meaning which I suppose it to contain is something like this ;—

‘ He bore an office, which, in every previous discharge of it, had been invested with the most exalted dignity, which had been surrounded with circumstances of such external splendor and magnificence, as to convey to every mind the ideas of the majesty and glory of God, and which, for these reasons, was called the image, the name, the presence, the glory, the Angel, and the Word of God. He bore this same office, and, as the history of his temptation proves, he had it in his power to appropriate to himself, if he had been disposed, the same appearances of visible and external grandeur. God had invested him with an office, and with it had conferred upon him powers, which would have enabled him to appear as God among men. But he did not eagerly desire to secure to himself this outward personal glory. He did not, and in this respect I urge his example upon your imitation, he did not make a vainglorious show of his great powers. He even stripped himself, while discharging his sublime office, of those external signs of distinction which had ever before accompanied it. No fire, nor smoke, nor thunderings, accompanied him. No cloud rested above, no light shone around him. He did not strive to attract attention or create admiration by any such means as these. He sought no notoriety. He appeared and moved in the most

humble station. He lived among us in the form and guise of a common man. And as he felt it his duty thus to appear in the world, he never departed from the course which he had marked out for himself; but met without resistance and with the most perfect humility every form of abuse and injury, and finally submitted to a painful and ignominious death, even the death of the cross. As a reward for this obedience and humility God has now highly exalted him far above every other agent employed by him in former times to act as his Word. They had been surrounded with a material glory only. But he is invested with a sublime moral glory. They had attracted the reverence and wonder of the Jews only, or in some instances of but a few individuals. He will be the object of deep, heartfelt, rational admiration to a continually increasing number, until at last all intelligent creatures will hail and bless him as the Word, the image of God. The time will come when every voice, in every nation and family of the earth, will acknowledge him to be Lord, and to exhibit in his character and principles, the character and attributes of God the Father.'

Such, in a free and familiar paraphrase, is the course of thought which, I am led, by the view of the Logos now submitted to your consideration, to suppose, the apostle meant to express, when he wrote this celebrated passage. I have refrained from entering into a critical interpretation of it, because there are one or two questions of mere philology, wholly unconnected with the design of these Letters, which

arise in the course of its investigation, and because you will be better able to determine how far my views of the Logos or office of Christ go to explain it, by a personal examination of the form and phraseology of the passage, than by any particular and minute interpretation which I might offer you.

7. The last class of texts which I shall now point out, as receiving illustration from the results of the present inquiry, is made up of those which speak of Christ's 'kingdom,' of the 'coming of his kingdom,' &c. The following will serve as instances :

Matt. xvi. 28. 'Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man *coming in his kingdom.*'

Col. i. 13. 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the *kingdom* of his dear Son.'

Perhaps there is no question connected with the phraseology of the New Testament, which has been found more difficult of solution than this. When did Christ come in his kingdom? From what period or event are we to date the commencement of that kingdom? There has been a singular want even of plausibleness in the answers which have been given to it. The most common opinion of the interpreters has been that the kingdom of Christ, or of Heaven, or of God, for they all are used convertibly in the New Testament, commenced at the precise period of the abolition of the Jewish peculiarity, by the destruction of the city, and the dispersion of the nation, of the Jews. It has, however, been proved by Cappe, in his

very ingenious discussion of the subject, that the kingdom of Christ began long before that period. Having overthrown the common opinion abovementioned, Cappe goes on to give his view of the period from which to date its commencement, which is this ;—‘ It is the power from on high, the dispensation of the spirit, the extraordinary gifts with which his doctrine, (the gospel) was preached and patronized, which, in scripture language, is called the kingdom of Christ.’ *

But it seems to me that neither this nor any other hypothesis which dates the coming of his kingdom from any outward, public, notorious act or event, can be sustained for a moment, and for this reason ; they are in direct opposition to the deliberate declaration of our Saviour. He said that the coming of his kingdom could not be discerned by any outward signs whatever. Luke xvii. 20, 21. ‘ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, ‘ *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.* Neither shall they say, *Lo here ! or Lo there !* for behold, *the kingdom of God is within you.*’ It would hardly be possible to declare in plainer or stronger terms, that the coming of that kingdom could not be indicated by any external circumstances whatever ; but that it was entirely an inward, moral effect ; that the kingdom itself consisted in a state of the mind, and its coming, in the formation of such a state of the mind.

I now proceed to point out the effect produced upon the forms of expression, which we are now con-

* Crit. Rem. Vol. I. p. 131.

sidering, by the view which has in this discussion been given of the Logos, as expressive of the office of Christ. The *glory* of a Shekinah has already been described to have consisted in those impressive circumstances which accompanied its appearance, and awakened the admiration and reverence of men. The *power* of a Shekinah, its influence, its dominion, consisted in the impression which was thus made, and was measured by the depth and the extent of that impression. The 'glory' of Jesus Christ, that last and perpetual Shekinah, has also been described to consist in those moral excellences and perfections which prove his truth as the Word of God, and attract the admiration and reverence of men towards him as towards the image of God. His *power* and *kingdom*, consequently, embrace all those who perceive this the true glory of his character, and regard him as portraying in his example and instructions the moral attributes and the holy will of God. As his glory consists in his being an image of the moral perfections of God, so his kingdom must be considered as extending to every mind which recognises this his glory. 'He reigns,' to use the language of a writer, whose rich and noble genius seems to take peculiar delight in delineating the character of Jesus Christ and of his religion, 'he reigns by the manifestation of celestial virtues.*

It is to be determined, in the next place, when the kingdom, as it has now been described, commenced. As has been already remarked, it is not to be dated from any external events or changes of circumstances.

* Christian Examiner, Vol. V. p. 143.

Consisting entirely in a state of the thoughts and feelings, it may be said to have commenced when the thoughts and feelings began to pass into that state. In the previous paragraph this state of mind was explained to be a perception of the moral glory of Jesus Christ, an acknowledgment and reception of him as the constituted image of those of God's attributes, which he would have us endeavour to imitate. This was the only view of his character and office which could represent to men his true glory. While other views were taken of him, his true glory was obscured, and could not possibly be discerned. Now if his kingdom consisted in this perception of his glory, it may be considered as beginning in every mind, at the precise point of time at which it began to regard him in this true light, and to invest him with this his real and proper glory.

But it is probable that while he lived, he was viewed, even by those who had entered most deeply into the spirit of his character, in a far different light. Until he had absolutely expired on the cross, and the water mixed with blood had been seen to flow from his pierced side, there is reason to believe, that in the minds of all his disciples, his name and person continued to be associated with mistaken views and expectations, with those hopes and desires of temporal and earthly deliverance and dominion, which every Jew had long been taught to believe the Messiah would work out for his nation. When, however, he had actually died, and his lifeless and mangled body had been handled by them, and the dark and silent tomb had closed

upon it, all these mistaken views, these false expectations and hopes were entirely removed from the minds of his disappointed and afflicted followers. They no longer interposed to veil from their sight his true glory, the moral perfection of his character and of his doctrines. When their minds were thus prepared to receive him in his true character, his resurrection, and ascension, and the descent of miraculous powers upon them, restored and confirmed forever their faith. When all this had taken place, and he began to be thus regarded, he *entered into his glory*, and all, who thus received him and viewed him in this light, *entered into the kingdom*.

If I had not already wearied your patience, I should delight to enter into a particular application of these views of the 'glory' and 'kingdom' of Christ to the language of the New Testament, in such passages for instance as the following ;—

Luke xxiv. 26. 'Ought not *Christ to have suffered these things*, and to enter into his glory?'

John xvii. 1. 'These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, *the hour is come. Glorify thy Son*, that thy Son also may glorify thee.'

John xvii. 5. 'And now, O Father, *glorify thou me.*'

Matt. xvi. 28. 'Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see *the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*'

It seems probable that 'the Comforter' means the effect produced upon the followers of Christ by the change of mind, of which I have spoken, as bringing

them 'into the kingdom.' While they entertained false views of the character and office of their Master, they were continually the victims of disappointment, and, at the time of his death, were driven to despair. But when they perceived his true glory, and discovered that the kingdom into which his followers were admitted was a spiritual, a heavenly kingdom, they were encouraged and confirmed. Their views were infinitely expanded. They were filled with a deep confidence, with an exalted hope, with a holy joy, which could not be weakened or diminished by the world. If this is the meaning of Comforter, we can fully understand, in connexion with the views now presented of the coming of the kingdom of Christ, such a passage as the following ;—

John xvi. 7. *'It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart I will send him unto you.'*

There is one reflection arising from the view now taken of the kingdom of Christ, and of admission into it, which I cannot refrain from expressing. We now perceive what is the great, the perpetual, the ever strengthening evidence of the truth of our religion. It is the moral perfection of the character and principles of him who was commissioned and sent to be the Word of God in establishing it. It is this, which has given that impress of divinity to it, which will forever sink deeper and shine brighter. The higher the moral and intellectual attainments of any individual, or of the race of men, the more clear and convincing will this evidence become. This glory of Christ, his moral

perfection, has secured the admiration and preserved the faith of thousands, through periods when his religion has been buried beneath a load of corruptions, which of themselves would have repulsed every rational mind and every pure heart.

Fanaticism and folly have endeavoured, by associating with his religion the most horrible doctrines, by destroying the simplicity and beauty of his character, and by attributing to him a mode of speaking which would be considered deceptive among men, to obstruct and extinguish the sublime moral light which beamed around him, and thus destroy the great evidence of the divinity of his mission. But they never have succeeded. They never can succeed. It would be easier to put out the light of the sun, or to prevent its rays from reaching and warming the earth, than it would be to shut the eyes and the hearts of reflecting, intelligent, refined, or good men against the brighter, warmer radiance shed forth from the character of him, who, in the vision of the prophet, shone as the 'Sun of Righteousness.'

As the idolatrous Israelites came back trembling to their God when he appeared before them in the material glory of a Shekinah, so every doubting, wavering, disbelieving mind is compelled to return to faith and reverence, whenever Jesus, the everlasting Shekinah, appears before it in the sublime, the celestial glory of his moral perfections. And here I would appeal to the experience of every man, and there are many such men, whom the corruptions of Christianity have almost driven to infidelity, but who still adheres firmly to the

faith, and I doubt not this would be his testimony. 'I could not receive the religion as it had been presented to me, crowded with doctrines as repulsive to the sensibility of a good heart, as to the reason of an intelligent mind, and I was about to reject it; but I read the words, and contemplated the character and conduct of Jesus Christ, and his actions, his language, his sentiments were so reasonable, so pure, so holy, so heavenly, that I could doubt no longer; all distrust was driven away. Never can I reflect upon the moral splendors of his character; never can I look upon his *glory*, without exclaiming, surely God was with him?' Even the most obstinate and stubborn unbelievers never have been able to resist the force of the evidence of which I am speaking. They have all bowed down before the glory of Christ. In one of my former Letters it has been shown how it broke in upon the infidelity of Rousseau. With an irresistible power it compelled him to testify, as those possessed of an evil spirit had been compelled to testify before, "Jesus, thou Son of God!"'

I have now completed the task, which I was led to impose upon myself, in attempting to reduce to a regular shape the view which has occurred to me as the true one, of the interpretation of Logos, and of the office of Christ, as it appears to have been regarded by the scripture writers. The nature of the subject has been such that it would not have been proper, were it possible for me to have done it, to have discussed it in a lighter and less tedious form. As this theory of interpretation is, taken as a whole, as far as

I am informed, quite new, I have great reason to fear that there will be found some obscurity, and many deficiencies in the manner in which it is set forth in these Letters. For all these things, I ask that just and charitable consideration, which the novelty and intrinsic difficulty of the subject seem to suggest.

As I promised at the outset, it has been my endeavour to avoid entering into any unnecessary digressions. It appeared to me most proper to quote from the Common Version of the scriptures, imperfect as it is in some respects, in all cases where such quotation became necessary. I have likewise abstained from all questions of the criticism, and of the true reading of the texts, and have even quoted, for the purpose of illustration, passages or words the genuineness of which is extremely doubtful, without any marks of discrimination; such as John v. 4, and 1 Tim. iii. 16. And I have done so because, whether genuine or not, it is well to ascertain their meaning. It is certainly something gained, to remove the false, and ascertain the true signification, even of a spurious text.

It is proper perhaps for me to observe that, although, as was mentioned in my First Letter, Lowman's Three Tracts first suggested this view of the Logos to my mind, I am indebted to him but for a part of the materials which enter into this discussion. He guided me through the first part of the Fifth Letter, and provided me with a few of the interpretations of particular passages. He reflected no light upon that part of the investigation contained in the Third and Fourth

Letters, the object of which was to ascertain the false meanings attached to Logos. Indeed there is so singular a want of clearness and method in his above-mentioned work, that it is difficult to determine with certainty what his views were. It should be remembered, however, in palliation of its faults and imperfections, that it is merely a collection of posthumous and unfinished tracts. So imperfect and obscure are the views contained in them, that they do not appear to have made any impression upon the minds, or even to have arrested the attention of the three celebrated divines, who collected and published them with a preface to which their names are subscribed, Samuel Chandler, Nathaniel Lardner, and Edward Sandercock.* It is still perhaps a matter capable of sustaining dispute, what were the precise views of Lowman. From a repeated examination of this and his other books, which, as a whole, are as good a guide as can be followed, in the study of the Jewish ritual, worship, government, and principles, and of the connexion between them and the phraseology of the scriptures, I am convinced that he entertained a view of the import of Logos, and of the office of Christ, similar to that presented in this inquiry.

I think that John Jones † and Lant Carpenter, ‡ both of them men who have studied the scriptures most thoroughly, seem to indicate in their writings that they attached a meaning to the Logos some-

* See Mrs Cappe's Life of her husband. Crit. Rem. vol. I. p. 22.

† Illustrations of the Gospels, Sec. II. and Appendix II.

‡ View of Unitarianism, p. 61.

what similar to that exhibited in my Fifth Letter, although they probably did not settle that meaning, by tracing it to its origin. Dr Benjamin Dawson, in a work on the Logos, endeavours with much ingenuity to interpret the several texts upon a theory peculiar to himself. He supposed it to mean, in all cases, what I suppose it to mean in some, the gospel, the religion which Jesus promulgated. It is unnecessary to remark that there are some instances, in which Logos is used, to which this meaning cannot be made to apply. A passage has already been quoted from Servetus, (p. 130,) which seems to show that he held an opinion, something like that set forth in these Letters. Other passages in his writings, which have fallen under my observation, seem to strengthen and confirm this impression. I believe, also, that the celebrated primitive Unitarian Praxeas entertained the same opinion of the office of Christ, and of Logos as the title of that office.* These are the only theologians, in whose opinions I have been able to find any considerable resemblance to that hypothesis, which I have ventured to offer to your consideration.

You will have remarked that the leading peculiarity of my theory is, that Logos was originally derived from the name applied by the Jews to the Divine appearances, and that its true meaning is to be found by investigating the views which they entertained of these Divine appearances. The correspondency between 'Logos' and 'Mimra,' the title of those appearances,

*Tertullian adversus Praxeam; Lardner's History of Heretics, p. 412.

has frequently been observed, and it is to me a cause of surprise that scholars have not thought it important to detect the several meanings of 'Mimra,' with the view of discovering the source, and the original meaning of Logos. Wakefield appears to have been struck with the circumstance of its use in the Targums. But the most remarkable case of inattention to this similarity of language is that of Le Clerc. It was his opinion, as you well know, that Logos was intended by John to signify the same in his Proem, which it does in the Platonic Philosophy, 'Reason.' By turning to his note to Heb. iv. 12, in his translation of Hammond, you will observe that he acknowledges the inapplicability of his usual interpretation of Logos, Reason, to the connexion in which it stands in that verse. 'I am apt to think,' says he, 'this phrase is taken from the custom of the Jews of that age, who for God, and any of the divine attributes, used to say, "the Word of God," of which custom there are still frequent instances in the Chaldean Paraphrases of the Old Testament, where in many places we find the "Word of God" set for "God."' It is astonishing to me that, when this great and most learned man found himself compelled, in this instance, to resort to Jewish sources, and to 'Mimra,' for the proper interpretation of Logos, he was not led to suspect, that in other places, and even in the Proem of John's Gospel, it might be applied with success to the developement of its true and original meaning.

Notwithstanding the inconsiderable number of those who have preceded me in the view now taken of this

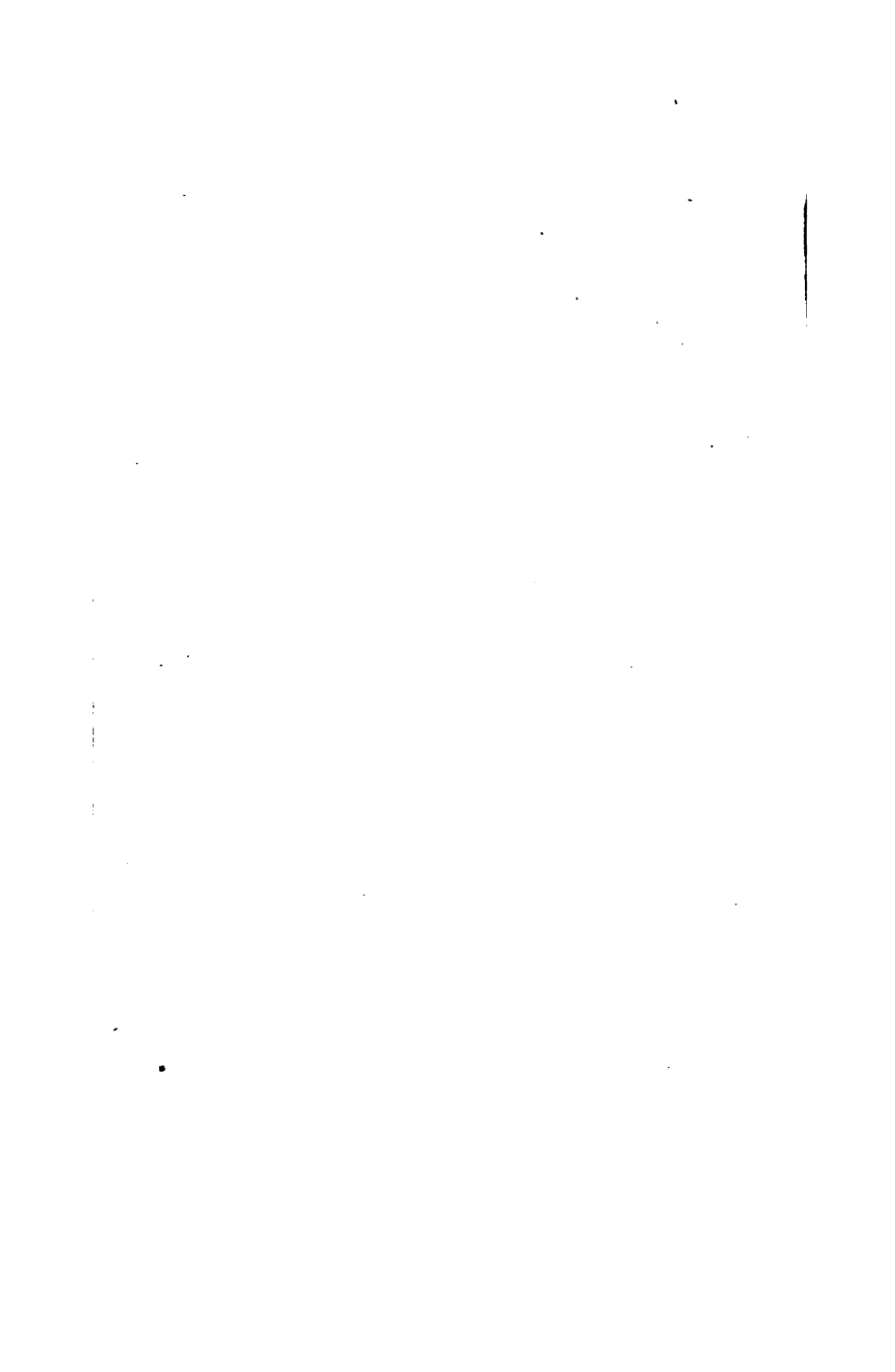
important subject, I cannot but cherish a strong assurance that it is correct and can be sustained. It appears to me to be natural and reasonable. The phraseology of those passages in which Logos is used, especially of the Preface of John's gospel, certainly countenances, if it does not establish it. And although the interpreters are almost all disposed to give a different view, still there is scarcely one, who has not contributed something to confirm me in my own.

You may, perhaps, smile at my confidence. It is because I am aware that we are all liable to indulge too sanguine an assurance of the correctness of any favorite opinion, to overrate the strength of the arguments in its support, and to be totally blind to all arguments in opposition to it, that I have taken the liberty of addressing to you these letters. Knowing the value of your time, and the arduous nature of your duties, I certainly should not have asked your attention to them, if I had entertained the least expectation that they would have reached to their present length. But I did not see in what manner to prevent the extension of the inquiry to the dimensions in which it now stands. I am duly thankful, I trust, for the friendly interest which you have manifested in the course of the investigation. If I am wrong, the sources of my error may be detected and pointed out by you, and others to whom these views may be presented. And we surely ought to be as anxious to discover our errors, as to confirm the truths which we entertain. This is too important a subject for us to be willing to acquiesce in mistaken views of it. Whatever may be the

meaning of Logos, it is our duty to endeavour to ascertain it, for it is certainly applied to our religion, and to its founder. An ignorance of its meaning may keep us from apprehending truly these great objects of thought and feeling. A knowledge of it may admit us to more noble and exalted conceptions of them.

With such views of the high, I had almost said supreme importance of this subject, I entered upon its investigation. During its laborious progress I have been cheered continually by an increasing satisfaction; and now, at its close, I feel a strong assurance that the results to which I have arrived are sound and true. I can hardly venture to presume that you will sympathize with me in this feeling. But of this I am sure, that you will read these Letters with the single purpose of discovering the truth; and this is all I ask, or wish. It was the only purpose for which they were written.

THE END.



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